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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify and analyze the writing strategies of eighth- and ninth-grade black and white students on the 1983-84 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Black students, who were from an urban area in New Jersey, had also taken the New Jersey High School Proficiency Test (NJHSPT). Following an initial study that examined test booklets, some completed by students known to be black, a classification scheme was developed to identify and analyze features in the students' essays. Classification techniques were refined through successive samples of NAEP and NJHSPT essays, for a total of 375. Data were analyzed across four modes of writing: imaginative, informative, persuasive, and narrative. There were differences between essays written by black and white students, but the differences were more quantitative than qualitative. Both groups used most of the same features, but fewer black students than white students used the features effectively. For black students in particular, the imaginative and narrative essays drew more enthusiastic responses and were written in a more engaging manner than the informative and persuasive essays. They were more likely to show enthusiasm for writing, but at the same time, they were more likely to reveal students' deficiencies in writing skills. Appendix A gives examples of black vernacular, and Appendix B presents two tables of correlations among factors used by white and black students. (Contains 3 figures, 8 tables, and 18 references.) (SLD)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WRITING FEATURES USED BY SELECTED BLACK AND WHITE STUDENTS IN THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND THE NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY TEST

Miriam T. Chaplin

Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey
August 1988

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A Comparative Analysis of Writing Features Used by Selected Black and White Students in the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the New Jersey High School Proficiency Test

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To the Memory of Dr. William Turnbull
whose interest and encouragement guided my efforts

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Correlations Among Features Used by White Students

A Comparative Analysis of Writing Features Used by Selected Black and White Students in the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the New Jersey High School Proficiency Test

Introduction

American education has always been subject to public scrutiny and at no time in our history has the attention been more intense than it has been in the last two decades. Spurred by the institution of mass testing programs which revealed the low performances of many students, the public has demanded that the schools set new curriculum priorities, develop innovative teaching strategies and pursue attainable goals and objectives in order to insure improvement in students' skill levels.

In the early 1980's, a national report A Nation at Risk, linked the underachievement of students to American inability to compete with other industrialized nations now and in the future. The report called for changes in all aspects of education and it named academic excellence as the ultimate goal of the schools. This report and others which followed placed education on the national agenda as a priority item and set the nation on a reform course.

The improvement of students' communication skills is extremely important to the success of the reform movement. For several years, reading has claimed the attention of educators. Now writing has moved into the spolight as well. Informed people in education and outside of it realize that while students can acquire information through reading, writing helps them to organize and synthesize their ideas. Moreover, the process of organization inherent in writing helps students to discover new ideas. Therefore, writing is fundamental to learning. It is also the means by which students communicate the knowledge they gain from reading and other experiences to audiences known and unknown. The attainment of academic excellence is dependent on students' abilities to write clearly and proficiently.

Writing is a process of synthesizing past and present interpretations of reality. When writing is used in personal transactions, the process is

relatively simple and occurs almost instinctively. In more formal situations, writing can be extremely difficult. Applebee warns, however, that it is not necessarily writing itself that is difficult, but "writing to meet the demands of a particular task complicates the process" (Applebee, 1981, p.2). When students are required to write in a testing situation, the difficulties inherent in writing to conform to specific demands are multiplied many times over. Those students who can relate to the topic and who have practiced or been taught to write in formal situations can usually produce an acceptable piece of writing. Students who lack such experiences are unlikely to perform as well. Yet, testing has become pervasive in the American system of education and it is necessary for all students to be able to display the full range of their abilities when they are tested. Instruction can assist students in the development of these abilities. Writing instruction, however, should not be limited to test preparation alone. Students must have varied experiences in writing that will teach them to shift gears as they write for many purposes and under many different circumstances.

One important step in teaching students to succeed in writing on demand is the analysis of students' writing in the tests which they have already taken. The present investigation takes an in-depth view of the essays written by early adolescent Black and White students in the 1983-84 National Assessment of Educational progress and Black students in the 1986 New Jersey High School Proficiency Test. The analysis of the data emanating from this study can be used to plan instruction that is immediately relevant to students' strengths and needs. Such instruction can be grounded in school sponsored writing, but its focus should be broad enough to include writing experiences which will lead to improved performances in testing and in the world beyond the classroom as well.

Rationale for Selection of the Target Population

Early adolesent Black students were chosen as a target group for this investigation for several reasons:

1. Black students have consistently scored below their White counterparts in the National Assessments of Educational Progress. While students are not identified by race in the New Jersey High School Proficiency Tests, those urban school districts with large Black populations have lower scores than other districts. Hence, it would appear that the performance of Black students merits study and attention.

2. English is the native language of American Black students. Therefore, teaching writing to these students does not involve the level of linguistic knowledge necessary for teaching bilingual students. In order to apply the results of this investigation to instruction, the target population must be confined to students who can be taught by regular classroom teachers.

3. Students in early adolescence are at a crucial point in development. As they leave childhood and move into the later teen years, it is particularly important for them to organize their thinking and draw generalizations from personal and school experiences. Writing can be a powerful tool in this endeavor. In addition, students at this age are aware of past failures and many have a strong desire to correct them. Adolescents, however, are easily detracted. Therefore, instruction must be clearly focused and purposeful in order to sustain their interest and motivation. This study is designed to reveal specific skill areas in which students can benefit from instructional intervention. The reteaching of skills previously mastered can be eliminated.

According to media reports of students' writing test scores, Black students are not meeting the demands of school or society. The reports do not explain that testing, by its very nature, creates a strained and atypical context for writing. Thus, test scores are not absolute measures of students' writing abilities. Test score reports are valuable, however, because they provide strong indications that immediate attention needs to be given to the development of Black student writers. A part of this urgency comes from demographics which show that the number of Black students is increasing more rapidly than White students. In 1976, the 20 largest school districts in the United States had approximately 2,882,000 minority students. In 1984, there were approximately 2,939,000 minorities in these districts. Fifty-seven percent of the total minority polulation in 1984 were Black students. While

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there was a larger increase of Hispanic and Asian students than Black students in these years, many Hispanic and Asian students are not native English speakers. Yet, Black students' writing test scores were as low or lower than these students. This trend is expected to continue. Thus, Black students will continue to be the largest English speaking minority in the 20 largest school districts. (Center for Education Statistics, 1987 p. 4.)

The interest in improving Black students' writing performances, however, should not stem only from the impact of a predicted population increase. As American citizens, Black students have a right to an education that stresses literacy. Despite the social and economic forces which complicate the efforts of students and educators, the responsibility for teaching Black students to write effectively must remain a vital and important objective of the schools.

Purpose of the Study

The study has long-range as well as short range-goals or components. As a short-range goal, the study is designed to identify and analyze the writing strategies of two groups of students--8th and 9th grade Black and White students in the 1983-84 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Black students from a selected urban area in the 1986 New Jersey High School Proficiency Test (NJHSPT).

NAEP and the New Jersey Department of Education have widely disseminated reports of the scores assigned to the students in their respective assessments. The present study is not a duplication of those reports nor is it a further evaluation of the students' performances. The present study, instead, is an analysis of the observable features found in the students' essays written for NAEP and NJHSPT. Underlying the present study is a belief that the features found in the essays written by students for assessment purposes serve as keys to effective instruction and improved performances. The study will examine how individual students responded to writing tasks in the three modes assessed by NAEP (imaginative, informative, persuasive) and in the narrative mode assessed by the NJHSPT. The data will describe strengths and weaknesses in students' abilities to write in each of these modes.

Summary of Assessment Data

NAEP

The National Assessment of Educational Progress has conducted three assessments of the writing performances of 9, 13 and 17 year olds (1973-74, 1978-79 and 1983-84) and summarized its findings in a report called Writing Trends Across the Decade. Using data gathered from a stratified sampling representing a total population of 95,000 students, NAEP included tasks in informative, persuasive and imaginative writing. According to NAEP: "The papers were evaluated to reflect students' success in accomplishing the specific purpose of each writing task as well as their overall writing fluency" (NAEP, 1985 p. 5). Holistic evaluation and Primary Trait Scoring were employed. While the report shows that there were fluctuating gains and declines among the three age groups, it generally acknowledges that there is "clear cause for concern about the writing proficiency of the nation's students" (1985). A more recent NAEP publication, The Writing Report Card (1986) is a summary of the 1983-84 writing assessment. The writing tasks as well as the evaluation procedures in the 1983-84 assessment were similar to the ones used in previous asseessments.

In all of the NAEP assessments, Black students have scored below White students. In the 1983-84 assessment, NAEP used a technique called Average Response Method to compare achievement between the sub-groups of Black students, White students, Asians and Hispanics. ARM is a statistical procedure which uses scaled scores to represent aggregates of students (NAEP, 1986). As shown in the graph taken from the The Writing Report Card, and called Figure 1, the performance of Black students is approximately 25 points below that of White students at all three grade levels. Indeed, the performance of Black students is lower than that of Hispanics at grade 4 and 8 and equal to them in grade 11. This is true despite the fact that many Hispanic students may have difficulty in writing because they are not native speakers of the English language.

Place Figure 1 Here

New Jersey High School Proficiency Test

On April 15, 16, and 17, 1986 all ninth graders in New Jersey took a test in reading, writing, and mathematics. Students who failed to attain a score at least equal to the state standards were required to receive remedial instruction and to be retested in each succeeding grade up to grade 12. While the testing program has been in effect for three years, 1986 is the first year that the results were to be linked to graduation. If New Jersey students fail to achieve a passing score by grade 12, they are to be denied a high school diploma. In the writing portion of the NJHSPT, students take a multiple-choice test which accounts for 40% of the total score and write an essay which accounts for 60% of the total score. The combined passing score for writing is 77.

In 1986, 80,393 9th grade students were tested in writing and 76.5 percent of the students were at or above state standards. In the 56 urban districts, 24,178 students were tested and 58.3 percent attained state standards or exceeded them.

In the district which houses the target population in this study, the Black population is 8,224, approximately 60 percent of the total population. There are two high schools in the district. The percentage of Black ninth-grade students in these two high schools is approximately the same as the percentage of Black students in the total school population. The essays analyzed for this preliminary investigation were taken from one of the high schools. Only essays written by Black students were included in the sample. In 1986, 473 students at the targeted high schools were given the writing test and 40.6 percent passed. The mean essay score was 6.8 on 12-point scale.

There are more Black students in urban schools than in suburban and rural schools. In order to obtain the numbers of Black students needed for assessment purposes, NAEP oversamples urban schools. Therefore, the data

presented in this study are not necessarily representative of all Black students. The data represent, however, the features identified in the writing of urban Black students in a national as well as a selected local sample of students.

Organization and Design of the Study

Assessment can inform instruction by identifying features which need to be strengthened. In addition, assessment leads to the recognition of natural abilities that can be nurtured and reinforced. The following questions are springboards for this investigation:

1. Are there unique features in Black students' writing that interfere with successful communication?

2. Do Black student writers employ the same kinds of writing strategies as other writers of the same age group?

3. Are there identifiable features in Black students' writing that reflect a particular learning style or cognitive approach to academic writing tasks?

4. Can the weaknesses identified in Black students' writing be corrected through a developmental process of classroom instruction?

This investigation is exploratory in nature. It does not begin with hypotheses to be proved or disproved; it is a search for answers to the questions listed above, but it also may generate more questions. The scores assigned to students in NAEP and NJHSPT, while important to the rationale for the study, are not variables to be considered. This study does not evaluate the students' writing abilities. Instead, it analyzes the features found in samples of student writing in order to determine if and how instruction can improve them. The investigation is divided into two sections. The first section includes the development of a classification scheme to be used as a potential tool for classroom instruction. The second section presents the data and the analyses.

Part I - DEVELOPMENT OF A CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

Selecting Students and Identifying Characteristics

A review of the NAEP 1983-84 testing revealed that there were two test booklets that contained essays written by the same 13-year olds and/or eighth-grade students in three modes: informative, imaginative and persuasive. There were approximately 1350 essays in this set of essays. From this collection of essays, every 10th booklet was drawn from each storage box for reading. Thus, a total of 135 NAEP booklets were used in this part of the study. Each book contained 3 essays with the following prompts for writing:

> Imaginative: Use the space provided to write a good, scary ghost story.
>
> Informative: Different people have different reasons for liking their favorite kind of music. Write about your favorite kind of music and explain why you like it so much.
>
> Persuasive: Suppose the school board has decided on a new school schedule it feels will be more effective and convenient for both students and teachers. Half the students will be assigned to a morning session and the other half to an afternoon session.
>
> Morning Session - 7:30 a.m. to noon
> Afternoon Session - 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
>
> The principal has promised to consider all requests before assigning students to the morning session or the afternoon session. You definitely prefer one session to the other because you need a certain part of your day free for important activities.
>
> Write a letter to the principal naming which session you want and explaining in detail why you want it. Your chances of getting the session you want will depend on how convincing your letter is, so be sure to explain your situation fully.

In addition to the Principal Investigator, three other readers were selected to read the essays in order to identify the observable features in the student writing. Each of the readers had taught writing to early adolescent Black students and had earned one or more advanced degrees in

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English or English Education. All were currently involved as instructors in the field. Neither the Principal Investigator nor the other readers were informed of the students' races. The Principal Investigator directed the readers to read the essays and, on the basis of the features in the writing, to make an educated guess as to the writer's race. Space was provided on the response sheet for recording a reader's guesses of racial identifications as well as for recording the features in the writing.

The racial identification of students was taken from the background questions which NAEP included in the testing booklet. The questions were:
Are you

a. American Indian or Alaskan Native
b. Asian or Pacific Islander
c. Black
d. White
e. Other (What?)

Are you Hispanic?

a. No
b. Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano
c. Yes, Puerto Rican
d. Yes, Cuban
e. Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic (What?)

Among the 135 booklets in this sample, twenty-three were completed by students confirmed to be Black and 113 were completed by students who were confirmed to be either white or another minority. The results of the initial reading are shown in Table 1.

(Place Table 1 here)

Readers one and three identified 17 of the 23 Black students correctly. The second reader identified 13 students correctly and the fourth reader identified 14 students correctly. Of the minorities who were selected as Black, 2 Hispanic students were selected by all three readers; the other minorities selected as Black included one Mexican and one student who identified himself/herself as Indian.

Three essays per student written in each of the modes (imaginative, informative and persuasive) were stapled together and read by the readers as a unit. One of the essays (informative) was about the students' favorite kind of music. This selection may seem to have aided the readers in their racial identifications because music tends to have a cultural orientation. However, identification based on this hypothesis alone was not always accurate. Consider the following pieces taken from the papers of two White students who were identified as Black by each of the four readers:

> I like Gospel music because I love God and I'm a Christian and my mom listens to it almost everyday.
>
> I like Rock because it is my style in music. I like other kinds of music but rock is my style. Another reason I like Rock is because that's what I grew up on that and gospel so those are the one I like most.

The following pieces were written by Black students identified as White by all four readers:

> My favorite kind of music is pounk rock. I like this music because it has many beats and I a lot of my favorite songs and people.
>
> I like Disco cause it has a steady beat and not loud and its nice to listen to it and the singer are cute. But some soft rock is nice to listen to too. but Disco is my favorite and it has different beats in it.

The following student was actually Hispanic. The readers identified the student as Black. The last sentence was probably the reason for the selection:

> Some black people hate rock 'n' roll because Whit people sing it. Some people hate soul because Black sing it, then some like gossip music, punk rock, blues, jazz, and folk rock. But people are going to do what they like best. It like this if one of my white friend tell me your a chump from listening to soul music I'll tell them if they don't get out of my face they better.

Since the design of this study was naturalistic inquiry, the readers were given no parameters for their identifications of features. They were asked to refrain from imposing, inferring or presupposing features in the students' writing. The readers were directed to read the essays and record for each student the actual features found in the writing. While the readers were not directed to concentrate on ineffective strategies, the lists of features they produced were indeed indicative of ineffective writing in most instances.

Therefore, the lists of features by reader that follow are unedited notes taken directly from the recording sheets of the readers. The form varies from reader to reader.

The recorded features were as follows:

Reader 1

lack of connectives within and between sentences and paragraphs
repetition of words and/or ideas
absence of descriptive words
task awareness
ellipses - omission of words
audience awareness
global responses
unfocused chain - series of statements concretely linked, but having little relationship between beginning and end. Applebee, in his 1978 publication, coined this term.
cultural vocabulary
rhetorical leap - a sudden jump from one event to another
oral writing - no distinction between oral and written language
Primitive Narrative - writing about events that form a common nucleus, but do not yield a linked story. This term is also taken from Applebee.
finished task
serial listing of ideas

Reader 2

cultural influence
run-on sentences
lack of audience perception
sense of purpose missing
omitted words
incomplete approach to assignment
weak transitions
elliptical thought

Reader 3

immature story beginning (once upon a time)
repetition of "and," "then" "so" as connectives
few supporting details to expand topic
inconsistent or illogical detailing
lack of punctuation
missing words
basic descriptions - few vivid adjectives
incorrect use of articles a, an
dropping the "s" on words
indefinite reference (This girl named Mary was)
omission of 1st syllable of words
use of noun and pronoun at beginning of sentence
small "i" in reference to self
cultural influence in music preference

Reader 4

incorrect tense markers
cultural influence in music preference
missing final consonants
suffixes missing
influence of Black Vernacular English

Broadening Perspectives

In an attempt to determine whether these same features would appear with a different topic and under different testing circumstances, arrangements were made with the administration of the targeted School District to release copies of the 1986 New Jersey High School Proficiency Test essays for

analysis. A random sample of 200 essays written by students at one of the two High Schools were obtained and read over two consecutive days by three of the readers who had previously read the NAEP essays. The fourth reader could not attend this session. The prompt for the student essays was:

> "If you could go back in time, what day or event of your life would you like to live over? Write an essay that tells about that day or event and what made it special."

Since a great majority of the essays taken from the targeted High School were written by Black students, the readers were not told to make a racial identification in this reading. The readers were directed to record the features found in the students' writing in the same way as was done for the Black students in NAEP. The essays were placed in a large pile and readers randomly selected essays and read for one hour. At the end of the hour, the reading stopped and the essays were discussed. This process continued for a total of six consecutive hours. The procedure involved one hour of silent reading and one half hour of discussion with three 15-minute breaks in the six hour period. When the pile was exhausted, essays were exchanged between readers. Thus, some essays were read by more than one reader. At the end of the six hours, the Principal Investigator asked how the readers felt about continuing. The readers said they thought the same features were appearing over and over and to continue seemed counterproductive. They believed that they had sufficient evidence to begin to categorize the features. The recording sheets showed that Reader 1 had read 120 essays, Reader 2, 112 essays, and Reader 3, 118 essays. Each essay in the original pile had been read by at least one reader.

Synthesizing Characteristics

Readers returned on the second day to discuss and operationally define the features they had identified in NAEP and NJHSPT readings. The task for the day was the development of a classification scheme which represented the features identified by the readers in both the NAEP and NJHSPT.

It was extremely important for the readers to agree on the definitions they had assigned to the features. To reach agreement, some essays were reread for clarification; in others, features identified by one reader were extracted and compared to similar ones identified by other readers. The process was long and arduous. Yet, by the day's end, the readers were able to group the features into four areas: Grammar and Syntax, Organization, Task Perception and Cultural Influence. Specific features were listed under each of these broad areas. The classification scheme is shown in Figure 2.

(Place Figure 2 Here)

Grammar and Syntax

The first seven features in the classification scheme are identified as Grammar and Syntax. These features include the use of grammatical structures such as subject-verb agreement, conjunctions, modifying words (adverbs and adjectives), as well as the ability to write coherent and concise sentences of varying types. Conversational tone, a syntactical feature, differs from the other features in this group because it does not rely on grammar rules. It refers to the tendency to write as one speaks. It is often a characteristic of Black student writers and immature writers who have not learned to distinguish the differences between the production of oral speech and written language.

Organization

Unity of thought and focus, two features which deal with the logical ordering of ideas, are subsumed under the category of "organization" in the scheme. These two characteristics of effective writing are apparent when the writer's thoughts are coherent, ordered and presented in such a way that the reader is able to follow the ideas. Unity refers to the piece of writing as a whole, while focus refers to the relation of the sentences in the writing.

Together, they provide a coherent framework which is necessary and valuable to the writer as well as the reader.

Task Perception

Task Perception is the third general area in the classification scheme. It includes task awareness, audience awareness and task competion. Task awareness refers to the writer's ability to perceive the demands of the task and to fulfill the expectations of the reader. Task awareness is closely related to the experiences and interests of the writers. If the writers have no familiarity with the topic or are not motivated to respond to it, the writing may be incomplete and sometimes unintelligible. Audience awareness refers to the writer's ability to look beyond the writing to the audience for whom it is intended. Effective writers adjust the tone and style to accommodate an audience. Ineffective writers seem to be unable to adjust to the task or to conceive of the audience. Their efforts become laborious and tiring to readers and writers alike.

Cultural Influence

The final section of the classification scheme refers to the way in which the writer's culture may influence the choice of words or ideas. A writer's culture always affects the way he/she perceives reality, but the effect of culture on the language the writer uses is sometimes unknown to the reader. The extent to which a reader recognizes and understands cultural expressions depends on the familiarity the reader may have with the writer's cultures. In this investigation, cultural vocabulary refers to words and phrases which originate specifically in Black culture. They were recognized by the readers because the readers and some of the writers share a common culture. Sometimes, however, these cultural expressions are unique to a certain region.

Cultural vocabulary is not a writing deficiency and it is not necessary for teachers to strive to eliminate it. Students need to be trained, however, to use cultural expressions in ways that enhance the effectiveness of their

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communications rather than detract from them. The data in this investigation suggest that the students have not been so trained.

The identification of Black Vernacular English (BVE), in this investigation, is restricted to certain surface features of language usually attributed to Black Americans. These features are drawn from the work of Smitherman and Wright (1983) and are shown in the appendix of this report.

Since the purpose of this study was to form a link between testing and instruction, the classification scheme was applied to student essays to enable the investigator to determine the degree to which the students were able to use cultural orientation to their advantage.

Comparing Students' Writing

The classification scheme was used by the readers to identify and analyze the features evidenced in the students' essays. For the analysis in Part One, the readers reread the essays written by the 23 Black students in the NAEP random sample and 50 White students in the same sample. The readers also reread 50 of the essays written by Black 9th graders for the NJHSPT. The results of that reading are shown in Table 2. Using the data compiled from each of the three readers, the table shows the percentage of times the three groups of students (White NAEP, Black NAEP and NJHSPT) exhibited the features as described in the classification scheme.

It may be necessary to refer to the classification scheme in order to interpret the table. Ex. Reader 1's recording shows that 52% of the White NAEP students used a variety of semantic and syntactic structures to tie thoughts together while only 18% of the Black NAEP students and 26% of The NJHSPT students used connectives in this way. The same reader recorded that 78% of the White students did not omit words that were central to the idea while the percentage of Black NAEP students who did not omit necessary words was 43.

Place Table 2 Here

Generally, the features exhibited by many of the White students in NAEP resulted in more effective prose than did the features exhibited by many of the Black students in NAEP or NJHSPT. Effective prose was determined by the readers to be that which contained features that closely resembled the descriptions in the classification scheme. In several instances, the percentages of features identified for New Jersey students were higher than those for Black NAEP students. It is important to note, however, that the percentages represent a sample of only 23 Black students in NAEP while there were 50 White students in NAEP and 50 Black students in NJHSPT. It must also be noted that each percentage for NAEP represents 3 essays (imaginative, informative, persuasive) while for NJHSPT, there was only one essay (narrative) per student. A similar chart presented in Part 2 reflects larger sample sizes and the percentages of features in the essays are separated according to mode.

Determining Inter-Reader Reliability

The raw data resulting from the readers' analyses of the students' essays were analyzed for reader reliability. One student number in the NAEP sample of White students was erroneously listed more than once. This reduced the number of White students in the reliability data to 49. Figure 3 is a representation of the relative means of three readers' identification of essay features in the part one sample - 49 Whites students in NAEP, 23 Black students in NAEP and 50 Black students in NJHSPT.

Place Figure 3 Here

Figure 3 shows the relative means for the number of times the three readers agreed on the identification of features. (The highest possible relative mean is 0.9). High means indicate a high degree of agreement while low means indicate disagreement. The highest level of

agreement was in Black Vernacular English. This high mean can probably be attributed to the fact that each reader used the same classification scheme to identify the Black Vernacular English in the students' papers - the classification scheme of Smitherman and Wright shown in the appendix of this report. The low level of agreement (0.3%) for cultural vocabulary probably stems from the fluctuating degree of familiarity that readers had with the expressions.

Figure 3 shows a high degree of agreement between readers in all but two strategies (audience awareness and cultural vocabulary). To be sure, there is a degree of subjectivity in all essay reading. In identifying cultural vocabulary, the readers' own cultural experiences may strengthen this subjectivity. Furthermore, a reader's expectations as a teacher may affect judgments regarding the appropriate uses of language for specific audiences.

Even though the readers were selected on the basis of their extended experiences in teaching Black and White students in this age group, it is possible that they differ in their familiarity with, and definitions of, cultural expressions. Within Black and White cultures, regional differences occur because many expressions originate and are used in one geographic area and not in others. The sample of White students may represent greater cultural diversity than the sample of Black students because the designation "White" includes a variety of nationalities and ethnic orientations. Some of these cultures may be quite familiar to a reader and others may be less familiar. Therefore, the identification of cultural expressions in students' essays may be affected by the differences between the cultural experiences of the readers and the writers. While the readers in this investigation identified what they believed to be cultural expressions for both Black and White students, the Black students' use of cultural expressions was the specific focus of this study.

In this investigation, audience awareness refers to the writers' awareness of the person(s) likely to read the essay (teachers), the writers' abilities to adjust style and tone, and the writers' abilities to produce

appropriate for the given audience. Even though the readers agreed during the discussion phase of the reading on the description of the features, Figure 3 shows that there was disagreement when they applied the descriptions to their reading of the essays. Each of the readers, all teachers, appeared to have a highly subjective sense of what is an appropriate style and tone for an essay test. The level of agreement among the readers for audience awareness (35) and cultural vocabulary (0.3%) shown in Figure 3 is a clear indication that individual human judgment was a factor in readers' responses.

Correlation Studies

While no attempt was made to evaluate the students' writing competence, the essays were analyzed by the readers according to the features described in the classification scheme. The readers marked those features which were used exactly in the way they were described in the classification scheme as (1) and marked those features which were not used according to the descriptions in the classification scheme as (0). Subsequently, the features identified with the scheme were collapsed across the readers and correlated. The correlation matrix provided an indication of the way the features in the students' papers (N=122) related to each other. The matrix shows the correlations of the features for all students (n-122) collapsed across the findings of the three readers.

Place Table 3 Here

The matrix shows some high, moderately high, and low correlations. Features that were not highly correlated (.50 and below), indicate that the readers were able to differentiate among them. More highly correlated features suggest that readers' judgments were influenced by features that are interdependent, therefore more difficult to differentiate. The independence

and interdependence of the features shown in the matrix provide a picture of the diversity that the readers observed in the student papers. The relationships also systematically reflect a clear connection between those features that are generally deemed to contribute to effective writing. For this investigation, effective writing is determined by the writer's adherence to the discriptions in the classification scheme. Effective writing is considered to be synonomous with successful communication.

The features categorized under organization are most highly correlated (unity and focus = .71). Unity and focus provide a means for writers to cement ideas together into a meaningful whole. The high correlation between unity and descriptive language (.54) and between focus and descriptive language reflects another facet of effective writing. Elaboration (descriptive words and phrases) and organization reinforce each other in effective writing.

On the other hand, the consistent negative or low correlations of cultural vocabulary and Black Vernacular English with most features except each other suggest that the way these features were employed by the students has little or no positive relationship to what is considered effective writing in this study. The correlations of features of writing for this small sample of students were compared with the larger sample in part 2 of this investigation in order to determine whether similar systematic patterns of relationships would emerge.

Part 2 - CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF FEATURES

Methods for Data Collection

This section summarized the classification and analysis of the writing features exhibited in essays written by a larger sample of students-Black

and White eighth grade and/or 13 year old students drawn from the 1983-84 NAEP sample, and Black ninth-grade students in 1986 NJHSPT. The topics and modes described in part 1 also were used in part 2. For the part 2 analysis, the Principal Investigator was the only reader.

Arrangements were made with the targeted School District to obtain a random sample of 200 essays written by Black students at both High Schools for the 1986 NJHSPT. These essays were duplicated and numbered. Of the selected NJHSPT essays, 172 were read and analyzed. The NJHSPT essays were written in the narrative mode.

A random sample or 800 (400 Black, 400 White) students in the NAEP Data Bank was selected by the computer. This sample was drawn from the approximately 6,000 eighth grade and/or 13 year old students who wrote an imaginative, informative and persuasive essay for the assessment. Of the 800 NAEP essays selected at random, 603 were read and analyzed in part 2. Each student wrote an essay in each of the three modes. Ninty-five of the students were Black and 106 were White. Thus, 285 essays written by Black students and 318 essays written by White students were read and analyzed. Some students wrote only 1 line or a part of a line for the essay in one of the modes, but wrote complete essays in other modes. These students were counted in the total number of students, but they were listed as having no response for the particular mode they did not complete. (The total number of essays per mode is indicated in table 6).

Two recording sheets were prepared (Sheet A and Sheet B). Sheet A contained the students' identification number, race and sex. The students' race was determined by the background information provided by the student in the assessment book. A research assistant selected the booklets containing the essays and recorded the identification numbers, races and sexes on Sheet A. Copies were made of each essay and they were separated by mode. Sheet A was retained by the research assistant until the reading was completed.

The reader used Sheet B to record the features of writing exhibited in each paper in this sample. On this sheet, the reader also recorded what she hypothesized to be the race of each student. Subsequent to the reading, the research assistant compared the students' racial identifications as noted by the readers on Sheet A with the actual racial identifications recorded on Sheet B. Table 4 shows the results of that comparison.

Place Table 4 Here

Analysis of the Data

Table 4 shows that the highest percentage of correct guesses was made in response to the essay about students' favorite kind of music. As was suggested in Part 1, this selection could lead a reader toward a racial identification because of the relationship between music and culture. Therefore, the high percentage of correct guesses for this selection was not unexpected. However, the large number of students who did not write to this topic was suprising. It is generally assumed that early adolescents are drawn to the popular music of their time and thus would find this an appealing topic. The reason for the topic's lack of appeal may be that it required students to analyze why they liked a particular kind of music. Since music triggers an emotional and physical response rather than a verbal response in young adolescents, it may be quite difficult for them to express verbally. Music stimulates the desire of adolescents to dance or to reflect on life situations. These reflections are rarely shared with other people. Music is also used by young people to shut out the realities of the world. Indeed, music is so much a part of some adolescents that they carry portable recorders when they are traveling from one place to another. The close physical and mental proximity of the students to their music gives it a personal and subjective quality which works against analysis. Analysis requires objectivity and distancing from the object or subject to be analyzed. For these reasons, the task may have been difficult for the students to accomplish. Thus, many students did not respond at all to this topic; of those who did respond, the the essays were short. Many students could not go beyond, "I like it because of its beat."

The consistency of correct identifications of the writers of the ghost stories (imaginative) and the letters to the principal (persuasive) could not be so easily explained. However, the underlying reasons for these correct identifications could provide valuable information to inform this investigation. Was there bias in the reader which led her to identify more Black writers as ineffective users of the features and more White writers as effective users? Was there a style of writing unique to Black students? Since these questions demanded more attention, additional attempts were made to find answers to them.

The incorrectly identified essays were given to a second reader. The reader, in this instance, was highly trained in holistic scoring procedures. She was also an experienced English teacher. She was directed to read the essays according to the classification scheme and place them in three categories: low - extremely ineffective use of the features described in the classification scheme, average - acceptable use of the features, and high - highly effective use of the features. Table 5 presents the results of that reading.

Place Table 5 Here

The data from the reading yielded a relatively even distribution of features across the three categories. If there were bias toward the Black students, more White students identified as Black would consistently be found in the low column of each mode and more Black Students identified as White would be found in the high columns. The data did not support this hypothesis.

In the imaginative mode, of the 30 Black students identified as White, 53% of them were placed in the low category while 38% of the 34 White students identified as Black fell in the low category. Thus, based on the reader's judgments, more papers written by White students were classified in the low category. In the high column of the imaginative mode, 18% of the White students were identified as Black and 13% of the Black students were

identified as White. Without knowledge of the students' races, the reader placed more Black students in the high column.

In the informative mode, while there are lower percentages of Blacks identified as White in the low column than there are Whites identified as Black (28% as compared to 20%), a higher percentage of Blacks were identified as White in the high column (40% compared to 35%). The topic for the informative mode concerns favorite music. The low percentages again indicate that this topic did not generate effective writing from many Black or White Students. Yet, in the average category of the informative mode, the percentage of Blacks identified as White was slightly higher than the percentage of Whites identified as Black (40% compared to 35%).

In the persuasive mode, lower percentages of Blacks were identified as White were in the low category than Whites identified as Black (27% compared to 40%) and in the high category (20% compared to 30%). However, in the average category, 50% of the Blacks were identified as White, with only 30% of the Whites identified as Black.

The data shown in this table should not be used to draw conclusions for the study as a whole. Such would be misleading. The data provide rather conclusive evidence, however, for the lack of racial bias in the reader's identifications of the features.

Correlational Analyses of the Features Used by Black and White Students

In order to investigate the second question, (Is there a style of writing unique to Black students?) the essays were subjected to closer scrutiny. Correlational analyses of the features used by Black students and White students were obtained. The relationships between the features used by Black and White students when the two groups were separated were almost identical to

the relationships of the combined groups. Therefore, the implications of these matrices are not discussed here. The raw data for the matrices can be found in appendix B to this report. These date show that race was not a determinate of the way students made use of the features of writing.

Thus, since the correlational data could not support the hypothesis that Black and White students used the features differently, they did not indicate a Black writing style.

Field Dependent Writing Style

Smitherman contends that many Black student writers use a field dependent cognitive style that is recognizable in writing. A field dependent style, as she defines it, is the tendency to "link events and things together, to see reality whole." Field dependent thinkers and writers are "those whose cognitive style demands involvement with the field or phenomena being analyzed . . . or written about" (Smitherman, 1985 p. 5). This definition was used to determine whether a field dependent style could be observed in the essays of the Black students in the present study.

A review of the students' papers indicated that in the ghost story, many Black students made themselves or close family members the central character(s). In addition, the ghost was more often a real person for Black students while more White students made the ghost an imaginary character. The setting for the ghost story was often the neighborhood or the street where the Black writer lived, whereas many White students set their stories in distant lands or on other planets. It appears that more of the Black than White students placed their stories and characters in close proximity to themselves almost as if they were afraid to let go, suggesting field dependence.

In the persuasive task, (the letter to a principal) more Black than White students personalized the correspondence as if the principal was a peer rather

than a school authority. They used such expressions as "I'll see you later" as a closing or "I like you very much." These students seemed to view a letter as a personal communication. They gave little attention to the constraints of the task. Instead they personalized the writing, probably in an attempt to influence the principal's decision. This kind of personal touch suggests direct involvement.

For the favorite music topic, the Black students, more so than the White students, named a singing group rather than a kind of music as their preference. A popular activity for Black students is the imitation of singing groups. These personalities more than the music, are exalted by many Black students. For instance, it may be Michael Jackson that is favored - not rock and roll. When gospel music was named as the students' favorite, a singing group was not mentioned. Gospel music is not perceived in the same way as popular music by Black students. The important element in gospel music is the feeling it evokes in the listener. The listener often responds by joining in and adding his/her own movements. This "wholeness" of the gospel spirit is similar to the way Black students immerse themselves in their writing.

Many of the Black students used conversation techniques or dialogues intermittently in each of the modes of writing. If there was a field dependent cognitive style, it would probably be best detected in dialogue because dialogue can be an effective way to reveal a writer's perceptions. The dialogue in this study, however, was not so revealing. These students have not mastered the art of using voice to draw their readers into the writing.

Mina Shaughnessy (1977) describes a characteristic of immature or basic writers as the inability to stay with a point or to suspend the conclusion by elaborating ideas. Focus and unity are the features which represent the positive aspects of these characteristics in the present study. Fewer Black than White students used focus and unity effectively in their essays.

Shaughnessy has been joined by other researchers (Perl, 1979; Fowler, 1980) in declaring that nonstandard dialect speakers have a tendency to omit necessary words and phrases when they write. This tendency also was observed in this investigation and was identified as Ellipses. A large percentage of the Black students omitted necessary words and phrases in their essays.

It can be concluded from this cursory analysis that there are certain stylistic characteristics which appeared more often in the papers of Black students than of White students. Examples of these are the use of Cultural Vocabulary, Black Venacular English and Conversational Tone. The presence of these features may have helped the reader to identify some of the Black students. Yet, none of the features including Cultural Vocabulary, Black Vernacular English, and Conversation Tone were used exclusively by Black students and there were Black students who did not use either of these features. Therefore, it cannot be concluded from these data that these features identified a specific Black writing style.

The possibility that the reader's familiarity with similar student writers led to the correct racial identifications is plausible, but difficult to illustrate. Indeed, the reader had many years of teaching Black and White students and reading papers written by them in many classroom situations. Under these circumstances, an alert teacher "tunes into" students and learns more about them than he/she can ever tell. Michael Polanyi (Polanyi, 1966) says that this kind of perception emanates from a tacit dimension in the mind. A tacit dimension is a kind of sixth sense - a mental persuasion that cannot be explained. If one holds with Polanyi, the correct identifications of the students' races may be due in part to a tacit dimension in the mind of the reader and that dimension defies analysis.

Comparisons of the Features Found in Students' Essays

The subsquent discussion focuses on descriptive analyses of the features found in the essays written by the students in the target population for two

assessments of writing (NAEP and NJHSPT). It presents examples from the data for Black and White students in the three modes of the NAEP as well as for Black students in the narrative mode of NJHSPT. Table 6 shows the percentage of times Black and White student writers used the features as they were described in the classification scheme. Because the data is shown by mode of writing as well as population of writers, it is possible to compare the presence of features used across modes as well as between populations. The classification scheme shown in appendix A will aid the reader in drawing conclusions, implications and inferences from this data.

Place Table 6 here

Grammar and Syntax

Inter-Intra Sentence Connectives

For the informational and persuasive modes, less than 35% of the Black NAEP students coordinated their ideas with appropriate connectives. These data are based on a global judgment of each paper. The percentage for these same students' imaginative writing was only 17%. In the narrative mode, only 16% of the NJHSPT students used connectives appropriately.

The percentages for the White NAEP Students were above those of the Black Students, but like their Black Counterparts, the White students wrote more effective (similar to the descriptions in the classification scheme) essays in the persuasive and informative modes than in the imaginative mode. The differences in the students' use of connectives in the modes of writing may be connected to essay length, though this relationship cannot be confirmed with this data. Because the imaginative and narrative essays were longer and more complex than the informational and persuasive ones, more variety in connectives was needed.

Some students failed to use any punctuation between sentences and others

used punctuation incorrectly. The three types of connectives that were used most frequently were temporal conjunctions, pronominals and demonstratives. The overuse and continued repetition of these connectives indicate that many students in this investigation had not developed syntactic and semantic fluency in the use of appropriate connectives.

Examples: Inner-Intra Sentence Connectives

> Once at my house my friend came over and we heard noises so we got on the phone and called my friend and we were the only ones there so we were scared we went walking to the store and cam back the door was open and we did not go in because we thought someone was in there and it turned out to be my parents they had come home from shopping.
>
> White Student - NAEP

The only punctuation in the above essay is the period at the end. The pronominal "so" shows an attempt to connect ideas within the paragraph. In the second essay, the student used punctuation to separate ideas and there was some organization of the paragraphs. However, as in the first essay, the only connective is "so."

> There is one event in which I would like to live over was my family reuin of May 26, 1984.
>
> I would like to live this event over because it was very special I met relatives I have never met in my life one some who I haven't seen in over six years. I met some counsin aunts and uncles from Delaware, Virginia, Salem.
>
> My family reuin was held in Bridgeton, N.J. which is about four to five miles right out of Vinland, N.J. at my aunt Shirley's house. She has a very large house and yard. so that why we have it at her house.
>
> At my reuin we gave it a name we call it the Granny's picnic after my grandmother Granny. We have it every three years.. We do all kinds of things there, we have relay races, softball throws, broad jump and dance conted. After who ever wins each event we give them a Granny award

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in which my uncle Floyd thought of they are just tiny little plaques with a sports symbol on it.

Black Student-NJHSPT

Descriptive Language

The differences between the Black and White students' use of descriptive language is not as great as the differences for some other features. In all except the persuasive mode, many students, both Black and White, failed to use modifiers or modifying phrases to elaborate their ideas (Black imaginative - 67%; informational - 56%; narrative - 65%; White - imaginative - 73%; informational - 77%). A higher percentage of Black and White students used elaboration effectively to justify their preference for one school shift over another in the persuasive essay (Black - 87%; White 93%.). The persuasive essays, however, were much shorter than those in the imaginative and narrative modes. While many Black Students did not respond in the persuasive mode (24%), those who did respond wrote more elaborated essays than those written in the imaginative and informative modes. In the imaginative and narrative modes, the students appeared anxious to tell the story or the experience, but in their haste to get to the details, they did not give enough attention to full descriptions of them. The example below is typical of this problem. The student tells much of what happened at the party, but describes these events only as fun, exciting and special.

Examples: Descriptive Language

My birthday party last year was the first birthday party my mother had given me in a long time. My birthday party was fun and exciting. It wasn't the kind of a party where you just invite about five or six people. My birthday party was held at my house. The date of my party was Sept. 20th on a Saturday night at 8 p.m. until 1.p.m. There were lost of records being played at my party also. Since my party turned out to be a success for me I was thinking about having another one next year. I personally think my party was also special to me because it showed me that my mother didn't forget my birthday after all. At my birthday party I served cake, ice cream, potato chips, cookies and juice. I received lots of gifts from my friends also. After the party was over, I told my mother thank you by saying "Thank you mother, I love you."

Black Student - NJHSPT

> I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider placing me in the morning session because I have more energy in the morning and it will be cooler. I also would like to spend more time with my little brother, and my mother needs help at home.
>
> I also don't want to miss General hospital, and If I know my homework in the morning I will have time too do my homework and prepare for the next day. I also like to go by the phrase "The early bird gets the worm! Remember it helps me to have morning session because its neceary.
>
> Black Student - NAEP

In the above persuasive essay, the student's use of the old adage in the second paragraph helps to clarify or describe how the student felt about his/her preference.

Ellipsis

Ellipsis, as used in this classification scheme, is indicated by the omission of words and phrases that are necessary to the meaning of the sentence. These omissions made it difficult for a reader to follow the sense of a passage or understand the order of events. Ellipsis is often used by skilled writers when a meaning is implied in a passage. In the case of the student writers in this study, however, the meanings intended were not implied, nor could they be inferred. In a testing situation, it is difficult to determine whether an ellipsis is caused by time constraints, which may curtail rereading, or by carelessness. In the imaginative and informative modes, the White students had higher percentages in the ellipsis classification than the Black students (White students: imaginative- 78%; informative - 82%; Black students: imaginative - 49%; informative - 65%.) In this case, higher percentages mean that White students exhibited fewer

instances of word omissions than Black students. The following examples show how words were omitted in the students' essays. In the first paper, written by a Black student, more words were omitted in the first paragraph than in the second and third. It may be highly probable that in the beginning, the student was trying to conceptualize the story and thus paid little attention to what was being written. The story line had been established by the time the student got to the second paragraph. Therefore, the writing is improved. The White student did not omit necessary words, but the student did write incompletely constructed sentences.

Examples: Ellipses

> Once upon a time their was and big old wooden house nobody knew who the house where you hardly No one been in the town the town was name after this house because it was haunted by ghosts it was named ghost town one Halloween it was the perfect house for to be a Haunted House. So the high school grauate was try to make money for their trip. So thy went to the house they found dead people and old dusty furniture Handy do So the following day the Kim came back to investergate the house by herself. She found Mr. Yakes dead body in their she got scared. She ran to get help but help wasn't no were to be found.
>
> So she came back and the dead body was gone. She look around up and down She went in the next room came out and saw the dead bodies.
>
> Kim bagged back and was stav in the back. Winston came looking for her and found her dead. He turn her over and saw she had been stav He walk arounnd and look for the knife she gotten stave. He was killed by a fork going in his back. So no one never found out who was doing this killing.
>
> Black Student - NAEP

> "It was Halloween night and my friend Denise and I were daring enough to go to the old mansion "My brother had dared us to go into the mansion and stupid us told him we would. When Denise and I got to the mansion we had second thoughts. But we knew my brother would call us "chickens" if we didn't. Slowly I steped onto the porch creek! We opened the door looked in there Spider webs everywhere. The house was setteling so there were creeks everywhere. We walked up stairs to the last bedroom and looked in Boo! Eak! Stop screaming Denise its only my brother.
>
> White Student - NAEP

Repetition

In repetition, a larger percentage difference was observed between Black students in NAEP and NJHSPT than in any other feature (47% - NJHSPT; 86% - NAEP). More Black students in NJHSPT repeated words and phrases than did the Black students in NAEP. It is difficult to determine the reason for this difference. The percentage of repetitions in the NJHSPT, however may be related to the manner in which the prompt was stated. The NJHSPT essay called for students to recall a time they would like to go back to. Thus, many students repeated the phrase, "That's why I want to go back to it" several times. This could have been the students' approach to staying with the topic.

The percentage of Black Students and White students in NAEP who avoided repetition was identical in the persuasive mode (Black - 90%; White - 90%) Only 7% separates them in the imaginative mode (Black - 86% White - 93%) and 22% in the informative mode (Black - 60%; White - 82%). The percentages of repetition for both Black and White NAEP students are largely due to the repetition of then and so as beginning connectives. However, repetition, like ellipsis, may be due to carelessness or a lack of time for editing. (underlining added by Principal Investigator)

Examples: Repetition

> One night on Halloween, my friend and I went out trick or treating. We cam to an old house on top of a hill and i dared my friend to go up there, so she did. She didn't come back, so my other friend and I went up there to see if she was o.k. or not. My firend rang the doorbell and the door opened, there was my friend, it looked like she was hypnotized. Then we went inside and looked around. It was dark with spider webs on the wall and people in cages. Then the door closed. We were stuck inside. My friend ran up the stairs so I followed her, it was crazy, there were all these noises in one room, so I opened the door and found nothing. Then we heard a noise coming down the hall, we ran the other direction and ran straight into an old bag lady, then we turned around and saw an old man with chains on his legs cam down the hall. He was ben ooner and had a hump on his back, he had a long beard and thick eyebrows and no hair. We were so firghtened we didn't know what to do do, then we woke up.
>
> White Student - NAEP

Once there was an old man living in a big house alone. Every night he would hear strange sounds. So after a week later every thing starts to shake in the house. He was scared so he called ghost inspecter. The inspecter came he checked the house he said that everything was fine. So the inspecter left. That same night the ghost came back. The old man was whatching tv. the light and the tv was blinking of and on. The man called the inspecter. He came and the ghost said" I will kill you both." They both was scared. So they left the house and they got in the car. The house started shaking and it fell. There were graves under the house.

Black Student - NAEP

Sentence Sense

Black students in NAEP and NJHSPT wrote more illogical sentences than White students. In some cases, the lack of correct punctuation interfered with the sense of the sentence. In many other cases, dissimilar ideas were grouped together as sentences. This often resulted in a presentation of ideas that was too garbled to be understood. These illogical sentences often appeared in essays with several other more logical ones. (Parenthesis added by Principal Investigator)

Example:

One time there was ghost in the graveyard I was walking through the graveyard in he scary me in I ran in I fell down. One Halloween night was walking and tickerting one boy came up and scare me I ran home and I was crying for mother and father they came to the door. they said what rong with you and my sister came to the door. After that i went to and my mother read me a story and she said go to sleep and the next day I went to school on Halloween a witch scary me and a ghost scary me (ghost can come in your house in they can scary you to delf you didn't know that what you got to do on night like that watch out please that might thought egg on Halloween night you better watch out.*)

Black Student - NAEP

The essay above seems to attempt to describe the many ways that one can be frightened by ghosts on Halloween. The writer, however, moves from descriptive narrative into dialogue without signaling the reader. The words in parenthesis appear to be a warning, but it is difficult to understand what "that might thought egg" refers to.

Tense Markers

In all four modes, fewer Black than White students used tense markers correctly. (Blacks - imaginative - 48%; informative - 77%; persuasive - 77%; narrative - 41%; Whites - imaginative - 76%; informative - 94%; persuasive- 91%). Moreover, it can be observed in the data that the incorrect use of tense markers was more evident for Black students in the imaginative and narrative modes than in the informative and persuasive modes. There may be a reason for this difference. The difference could be attributed to the nature of the writing tasks in these modes and the way Black students related to these tasks. Stories and retellings (such as those called for in the narrative and imaginative modes) are often associated with oral language. Stories are popular means of communication in the Black community. Indeed, storytelling is an art form in African culture which has been passed down to current generations of Black Americans and it remains a viable part of their cultural heritage. When writing stories, inexperienced Black writers often transfer the informality of oral language to their writing.

Faulty inflectional endings, lack of subject-verb agreement and the incorrect use of irregular verbs were found in the students' papers. These incorrect forms, however, were not used consistently. The students would shift back and forth between correct and incorrect forms. This shifting may have been due to the influence of instruction in the conventions of written language through grammar exercises. The inconsistency of correct use may have appeared as these students attempted to apply what they had learned in the exercises to these writing assignments. According to Appleby (1978), Britton (1975) and Farr and Daniels (1986), teaching grammar from workbooks, worksheets and even through board exercises is a common practice in the schools which were a part of their research. These researchers warn that grammar learned apart from meaningful language may not be helpful when students are called upon to write. While the students may succeed in completing the exercises, they may fail in transfering the skill to actual writing.

Examples: Tense Markers

> Once upon a time there live a very old women she stayed in a very old house on top of the hill no hadn't never herld from her in a long time. Some people believed she was died. One day two men went up to house to see if Ms. Jenkins was home. As they were knocking on the door it begin to open. So the seach the old house and didn't find Ms. Jenkins so they decided to sell it. About a mouth later a couple and there dotter moved in to the old house.
>
> White Student - NAEP

> If I could go back in time to relive a special day it would be the day I and my best friend went to a special place that made my whole day filled with fun and laughter If I could relive that one day which turned into night I could finish off what I couldn't finish, because of my time limit that I had left, and time was also going so fast but it was nice it was the best time I ever had with any one, we talked watch television, listened to the radio, joke around a little then when all of that was over, we went out for a ride and rode all around with some more friends with the music plasting in the car, then when it was time to give in for the night. I was drove home safely and quick, just as soon as I got to my bedroom I tried to redream the whole thing over again, that didn't happen, but there's one think I know for sure I will never forget that day over at the dinner party at my cousin annas home.
>
> Black Student - NJHSPT

In the above examples, the students used correct as well as incorrect tense markers. The Black and the White student show a deficiency in the use of correct tense markers. The White student's essay seems incomplete but in spite of this switch, it is easier for the reader to comprehend the story.

Conversational Tone

Conversational tone, unlike the other components of this group, is not a grammatical skill. Conversational tone, in this study, refers to the practice of shifting voice in the midst of a piece of writing. It was used most often by the students in this investigation as they switched abruptly to dialogue or informal language. The switch is more problematic than simply a lack of quotation marks. When the students moved into dialogue, the complete tone and focus of the essay changed and it remained pure dialogue until the switch back to narration was made.

This shift causes the essay to read like recorded oral language or a conversation.

In this investigation, conversational tone was more characteristic of the Black than the White writers. Black students employed conversational tone more in the imaginative (22%) and narrative (25%) modes than in the informative mode (1%) or persuasive mode (15%). White students used the feature less often than the Black students in the imaginative (06%) and persuasive modes (08%), but the percentages for the informative mode were identical for Black and White students (01%)

The use of a conversational tone may stem from psychological as well as cultural roots for the students in this investigation. Psychologically, it may be a reflection of the egotism of this age group. Erik Erikson (1963) has explained that adolescents are in a stage of role confusion because they are in the midst of defining a value system that leaves behind the perspectives of childhood and reaches for adult interpretations of reality. This psychological strain on identity is often reflected in students' writing as they complicate what appears to be a simple adolescent problem by attacking it from an adult perspective. The following example is a case in point.

> If I could real live my special day. It would be the time I gave a pajama party. It was one thing I felt shore of. I felt like I was taking on responsibilities. I had to order one or two cake it all depends on how many people I invited Next I had to earn enough money for me to buy food for a certain amount of people.. I had to make arrangements with my mother and father to let me give a party in there home. Then if that was o.k. I would have to make room for everyone. Specially if ever one was coming. Even though I had a complication with ordering food, cake and pizza. I felt had courage to go throught with it. When I was about to give up my mother came into the room and sat on the bedside and said to me, (student used her correct name), it's for you to take on new responalities. I said that I'm not living up to my dream I think I rushing things a little to far. My mother people my age can only handle so much. then I said that I wanted you and dad to be proud of and she said we already are. Just knowing that you know how to take on different tasks and responnibities. But dont try to take on so much at on time your to young for that and make shore you come to me or your dad for help. I told my mother thank you for the advice I really need that talking to. So I called up my friend and told them that the pajama party is on. What fun did we have that was so alive that I told my mother I'll do another party next year. She said are you ready for

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> another party. I said shore I'm I didn't now how easy preparing for is and my friends enjoy. Then why is because of you, you gave me courage to go on. So that is the event that I would like to go back to.
>
> Black Student - NJHSPT

For Black students, conversational tone is as cultural as it is psychological. The oral tradition, according to Smitherman, "is part of the cultural baggage the African brought to America." (Smitherman, 1977 pp. 77-78). Other linguists have also written about the supremacy of oral language in Black cultural history. (Labov, 1970; Kochman, 1972) The story based nature of two of the essays in this study (imaginative and narrative) provided an outlet for some Black students to employ the same techniques that they would use in telling a story orally. This may help to explain why the percentages of Black students who used conversational tone was higher than that of White students.

The following examples show how many of the Black and White students in this investigation used conversational tone. The Black student takes the reader into the story. As the story is read, it is almost possible to visualize the nonverbal gestures that the storyteller used to help explain the story. The White student, on the other hand, uses dialogue to introduce the essay, but there is a detachment of the dialogue from the story line. (Underlining added by Principal Investigator)

Examples: Conversational Tone

> If I could go back in time I would like to go back to 1985. you see there was an incedient that happened and I still regret it to this very day. There was this girl her name I'd rathar not mention but let's call her Sharon. Anyway me and Sharon were just friend in the beginning but soon the relationship progressed even further than I had planned. You see it had got to the point where I did what was going on you see this girl liked to play with your mind. Because when she was with her friend she would act one way and when she's alone with me she would act another way.
>
> Like she would give me all kinds of hints, hints that she wanted me to ask her to go with me. Sure we went to the mall a couple of times and I bought her a few soda. But that was as far as the relationship went.
>
> So as a result of this act of not asking Sharon the question some one else asked her. Sure this has happened to me many times.. But this

was the wost one it felt like it felt like a slap in the face. So * any way she still goes with this guy and to this very day I still regret it. And it I could go back in time day and event of my life that's what I would change.

Black Student - NJHSPT

"Don't you hear that? "cried Ned. "It sounds like a throb or clunk" "I don't hear anything!"explained Julie. "Let's go see what it is!"

Slowly Julie and Ned climb the stairs to the second floor of the house. They both gasped when they saw Mother's antique lamp lying on the floor in three broken peices. As they continued they found other things that seemed slightly out of place. They entered they kitchen and what did see, but food, it was everywhere. The food was on floors, counters, chairs, everywhere. Ned and Julie ignored this while they proceeded on. When they got to the dining room what did they see but their cat, Sam, up on the china cabinet and their dog, Hap, beneath. Now the dog-cat chase was over but now it was time to clean up.

White Student - NAEP

Organization

Unity of Thought

Less than 55% of the Black students in NAEP and NJHSPT wrote essays in which the ideas were unified (imaginative - 37%; informative - 46%; persuasive - 53%; narrative - 52%). The percentages for White students were (imaginative - 58%; informative - 69%; persuasive - 65%). In some essays, the scrambling of ideas resembled free writing. In others, illogical rhetorical leaps were made from one idea to another. Some of this could have been caused by the time constraints of the testing situation since such essays are almost always first drafts. The NJHSPT, however, allows and openly suggests to students that they use five minutes for thinking and planning, 20 minutes for writing and 5 minutes for rereading and editing. Space is provided in the test booklet for these purposes, and directions to engage in editing and rewriting are included in the instructions that the examiner reads aloud. This imposed writing process may account for the differences in the percentages of unity in the imaginative and narrative essays (those which generated more writing) written by Black NAEP students and NJHSPT students (NAEP - 37%; NJHSPT - 52%). Yet, as the example below shows, some of the NJHSPT students as well as the NAEP students have a need for more development in organizational skills.

Examples: Unity of Thought

> If I could go back and think of what was special in my life I would. The very special thing me my life was when I was about 2 or 3 when I had good-times because, first I didn't have to go to school and many more. I can't express it because I've forgot about being 2 or 3 years old. I don't know. Well I will go back when I was a baby before I was 1 year old and I use to sit on the pot while my mother would train me and I use to just cry, and cry and cry that is very special because that is the only thing that I can remember. I would like to live that life over because the things I do now I could not do that in the past, that's why I would not minnd being a baby and not a young lady. But it really doesn't mind to me because i was going to have to be a young lady I could not a baby for the rest of my life and sit up here and never now how to talk, walk, and etc.
>
> Sometimes I can just sit here and think of what and how I was when I was a baby me and my mother sometimes sit and glance over pictures and she would tell me how much she knows of me now that's how special mylife in the old-times were to me very special Some things I just don't know what to say when many people ask me that I just say that I can't remember that's all.
>
> Black Student NJHSPT

The following essay was also written by a student for the NJHSPT. The organization is much better than in the former paper.

> I would like to go back to the time I graduated from East Camden Middle School. I was so proud of myself, and I was glad my three years were over. When I woke up in the morning, I was so scared that everything would go wrong. But my mom helped me feel more confident in myself. I was even more afraid that someone else would have on the same dress that I have on. My mom said not to worry about it because I looked nice in mine.
>
> When we arrived at the school, at the gym, I was so surprised to see how beautiful and handsome everybody was. I knew that I had got over my fear. My friends gave me complements on my dress. We talked about old times and how we going to be in the future. I didn't want to say good-by to them because we were so happy. All of our parents were taking pictures and showing off there kids to other parents.
>
> The gym was decorated in beautiful colors. There was streamers all over the place in pink, blue red. Each girl was given a yellow flower to wear on their dress. I could not believe the beautiful dresses that I saw. Even the boys Looked very nice in there suits. All of my old teachers congradulated me for all my good accomplishments I made to get to where I am.

> I could see in my mom eyes how proud she was of me and I loved her for that. I wanted to make her proud of me so she could show me off to the friends. She told me I looked so beautiful, I was the nicest girl there. And I thanked her, because if I wasn't for her I wouldn't be here.
>
> I didn't want to end the day. I was so afraid to say good-bye. I told them I would see them in HIGH SCHOOL!! I thought there are some good times coming and so bad times, and a lot of hard work. But if I could get through middle I can get through HIGH SCHOOL. It can't get any worse. I hope.
>
> Black Student - NJHSPT

Focus

While unity refers to the whole essay as a unified piece of writing, focus refers to the logical relationships among sentences that make up the whole essay. Unity and focus support each other. Therefore, most of the students whose essays had unity also had focus. This is not true in all cases. In imaginative, persuasive and narrative writing, the percentages for papers with focus is higher than those for papers which displayed unity. This is true for Black and White students. However, in informative writing, the percentages for Black students' papers with unity and those with focus is the same. For White students, there is a lower percentage in the informative mode for papers with focus than for those with unity.

	Black Students		White Students	
	NAEP & NJHSPT		NAEP	
	Focus	Unity	Focus	Unity
imaginative	37%	45%	58%	63%
persuasive	53%	58%	65%	70%
informative	46%	46%	69%	66%
narrative	52%	55%*		

*(no White students in NJHSPT narrative)

The essays without focus almost always had one central idea, but they went awry because the writers either failed to order the ideas or included one or two sentences that had no relationship to the main idea.

Examples: Focus:

> I would like the afternoon session because I like to sleep late. I also don't like getting up so earlly. But the morning session is O.K. if you want to get it over with. But instead i want the noon half. I like to go to breakfast, and be able to drive around, if I have a car. I don't really care what session I get, But if you can arrange it I would like the afternoon sesson.
>
> White Student - NAEP

> I would like you to put me in the morning session because I play many different sports and they all start in the afternoon around 4:00. So you see it would be impossible for me to play any sports if I went in the afternoon session. So could you please try to put me in the other session.
>
> White Student - NAEP

> I like soul because It have a good beat and when I am tried and need something to make me feel good I will turn on my soul music I like it because It put me in the mood to do my hjomework when I get home anbd listen to a son that have science. In it I just get my book and read about science that's Is why I love it.
>
> Black Student - NAEP

In the first essay, the student seems unable to decide which session was preferred. Reasons were offered for preferring both the morning and afternoon session. Preference is indeed the central idea, but the reader cannot be sure what the preference is. There is much more focus in the second and third essays. In both of these, the students listed a preference and reasons for the preferences.

Task Perception

Task Awareness

In the imaginative mode, 90% of the Black and White students appeared to be aware of the task and wrote specifically to it. Ninety-one per cent of the NJHSPT students' appear to be equally aware. The NAEP students, Black and

White, appear to be far less confident of the tasks in the informative and persuasive modes. In the informative mode, the percentages is only 63% for Black students and 67% for White students. Percentages in the persuasive mode are 44% for Black students and 66% for White students. This drop in percentages may indicate that the perception of a task depends not only on the writers' familiarity with the topic, but also with the specifics of the task. The favorite-music and split-session topics were probably familiar to most of the students, but the mode of response which called for supporting a preference may have been quite foreign to some of them. This lack of familiarity probably interfered with the students' abilities to satisfactorily respond to the task.

Any assessment reveals students who fail to read the prompt before they begin to write. In the NJHSPT, the prompt is read aloud by the examiner and the students are told to read it silently. However, some students rely only on the oral reading. They do not read for themselves as they are told. As a result, they may begin to write without a clear understanding of the task. There are other students, usually the ones who enjoy writing, who cannot accommodate the prompt in their thinking because they want to write about something else. These kinds of students may try to change their directions, but often are unable to do it. The essays below were probably written by such students. In the first example, the student seems to ignore the task while in the second, there is an attempt to write to the task. The student in the second example, however, obviously had an agenda of his/her own and was determined to follow it.

Examples: Task Awareness

> I want have candy machines out in the hall and be able to eat candy in class we can eat it home why can't we eat it here.
>
> White Student - NAEP

> Who I am I'm (student used correct name) I go to Woodrow Wilson High School. I'm in the 9th grade I am nice I go to school every day and ever one gets along with me.
>
> What day I would like to go back to is the time when I was little I didn't have no problems like I have today Before you can just sit

around and not think about anything but now I'm in High School I have a big job to do.

When I finish High School I wait to be an welder so I can welded ships and buildings together plus I think they make good money from the time they leave welding school.

Where I would like to go is to Airco Tech School of Training because they can find you a job when you graduate from the school.

Why I like it because it looks like an nice job to do why you are get ready to move in your own house or apartment and they make that type of money to do it that's why I like to be an welder.

How I plan to do this is to go soons I finish High School so I can get the job I alway had dreams for in life so as I get older I can have my family So we don't have to depend on somebody we can solve are problems on are own.

But the most important thing is when I do get my family I can have the job I wanted and the familly I need to keep me going everyday.

NJHSPT - Black Student

Audience Awareness

The percentages for audience awareness are very high for Black and White students in all but the persuasive mode. In the persuasive mode, the percentages are 70% for Black students and 78% for White students. The most noticeable discrepancy between groups of students occurs between the Black and White students in the NAEP informative mode. (Black - 79%; White, 91%.) This discrepancy may be due to several factors which include a difficulty with writing in the informative mode, an inability to conceive of an essay about music as school sponsored writing, an inability to write about an emotional topic like music and/or a lack of interest or motivation to succeed in the assessment. Motivation becomes a factor because the students were told at the outset by the NAEP Examiner that their performance on the test would not affect their grades. This kind of information may cause some grade conscious students to lose their enthusiasm for achieving success in the task.

Examples: Audience Awareness

I would really be happy if you gave me a morning session because I like to play sports. And you cann't play sport in the morning. thats

crazy. You also have more time to do homework because no does homework in the morning. So I better get in.

White Student - NAEP

Theirs not much to say why I like Rock and roll music because I just like the beat of the music.

Black Student - NAEP

My favorite kind of music is Rock-n-Roll because I like it because I want to.

Black Student - NAEP

I like church music because I'm good and I feel that the other music is the devil's music. I like music that talks about the lord. That wordly music doesn't mean anything church music is the today to be listening to.

White Student - NAEP

The persuasive task called for a letter to a principal. The letter in the first example above is not appropriate language or tone for a student to use in communicating with an authoritative person in the school such as a principal.

The other examples of the favorite music essays written by 3 Black students and one White student exemplify the difficulty many students had with the topic. Some students could not conceive of an audience because they could not get beyond the topic. Therefore, the essays read almost as if the students were hostile to the audience.

Task Completion

More than 70% of the Black and White students in all three groups were able to complete their essays. The lowest percentage for completion appeares in the informative essay written by Black NAEP students (71%). More of the Black NJHSPT students completed their essays than did the White or Black NAEP students. (NJHSPT - 95%; imaginative (Black) 81%; informative (Black) 71%; persuasive (Black) 85%; imaginative (White) 93%; informative (White) 84%; persuasive (White) 87%). This may be due to the longer time allotment for NJHSPT essays or to the advance preparation of the students for the testing situation. It is not possible to prepare students for NAEP testing because the

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tests are not required. The data show that more Black and White NAEP students completed the persuasive task than completed the informative task (Black-persuasive - 85%, informative 71%,White - persuasive - 87%, informative - 84%). It should be noted, however, that 23% of the Black NAEP students failed to respond to the informative task and 24% failed to respond to the persuasive task. These data cannot show whether the Black students were more affected by the time constraints or by a failure to comprehend the task.

Examples: Task Completion

> There was once a ghost name Lisa Leinis and she was a bumer she didn't like anybody and she hated test and teachers, but after all she had to go to school just like we do.
>
> Lisa was very smart when it came up to Spelling and same English, but she was very poor in math. but she
>
> Black Student - NAEP

> When I was a little boy my mother deserted me and the left me in a forest were all kinds of wild animal lived. And a pair of wolfs took me in to live at the home in a cage. But three days after the wolfs took me in the male wolfs bit me and I ran away as I was running hair started grow every were on my body. I remember were I had stayed in the country and I went there one night. I walk inside there were people living in there and they were my parents and I walk to my mother room and I grumble at here and it bit her an the neck and tour her head off and started to eat her body
>
> White Student - NAEP

The first student writer above may not have had enough time to develop the story. It could have taken him/her some time to think of a plot and to decide how it should be developed.

The second student has a complete idea, but it is poorly organized. The student tried to handle too many ideas in one paper. The data cannot show whether the student became confused and stopped writing or whether he/she did not have enough time to complete it.

Cultural Influence

Cultural Vocabulary

Seven per cent of the Black NAEP students used culturally oriented words

or phrases in the imaginative and informative modes while only 3% used similar words and phrases in the persuasive modes. Lower percentages of White NAEP students used culturally oriented expressions (imaginative - 01%; informative - 03%; persuasive - 01%). Ten percent of the NJHSPT students used cultural vocabulary in their essays.

The use of cultural vocabulary in writing is an example of the effect of culture on the world view and subsequent behavior of students. Lerone Bennett, Jr., speaking to a group of English teachers in 1976, quoted the great philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. According to Bennett, the philosopher said: "The word is a world and behind the word is a world view." (Bennett, 1976) The world view of students grows out of the culture from which they come. Thus, when students write, those words and phrases that have helped them to shape reality become a part of the writing.

The technique of integrating culturally unique words into writing can be effective when the writer uses it deliberately for emphasis or effect. Many Black writers and oraters use the technique in this way. In her writing, Geneva Smitherman-Donaldson often uses Black Vernacular English to help explain its origin and utility to her readers. (Smitherman, 1977). Martin Luther King was noted for weaving expressions from Black culture into his speeches and writing. Therefore, it appears that the Black students in this investigation are beginning to write in accord with a tradition that has preceded them. At this point in their development, they are probably not aware of what they are doing. With careful and sensitive instruction, however, they may be able to develop a sophistication in the use of this technique. (Underlining added by Principal Investigator)

Example: Cultural Vocabulary

> Once upon a time there was a small girl she was six, her name was Jody. One day Jody walked home from school and a man that was very ugly and mean looking man tried to kill her, so Jody ran and ran until she got on her porch and she just screamed. The man walked away and tried again the next day and the next day finially he caught

her and sliced her head clean off and that night he sllept good for he was happy until he heard the little girl scream for she had came back to haunt him she was saying wheres my head, wheres my head and she went in his house and took his head as her own.

Black Student - NAEP

If I could go back in that I would be great me and my cousin. Some guys had took us to see Purple Rain but my cousin did not like the guy and the other guy was my boyfriend. While we was going over Philly to see the movie my cousin was nice to the guy. Then after we saw the movie, she was ready to put him down. She didn't like him in the first place She just wanted someone to take her to see Purple Rain. Then she start looking at him funny and telling him she

didn't like him any more. and he said "Don't even try it. You just wanted to see the movie and she said that's right. It was so funny till I just couldn't laugh any more. "She took him to the cleaners.

Black Student - NJHSPT

My favorite kind of music is rock music. I like it because it has a good beat, and also rythmic lyrics. Although some songs are far out, the fact that the tune is so good it hides the words.

White Student - NAEP

If I could go back in time, I would live over the time I went to Florida. Florida is such a lovely place to go. When you get there, their are so many interesting things to do. Such as you could go swimming everyday of the week.

It never gets cold hardly. When you get bored, you could take a nice long walk and check out the happenings and the sights. The best place to go if you are in Florida is Busch Gardens. Busch Garden has so many beautiful things that you would want to do and see. Such as you could go to museums, or just walk around and see the most fantastic things you never seen before. Their are the most beautiful animals and creatures that you would want to see. You will have fun even if you don't want to. So if your ever in Florida, don't forget to see, look and do everything. That's the day I would like to live over, if I could go back in time.

Black Student - NJHSPT

Black Vernacular English

The percentages shown for the use of Black Vernacular English represent

consistent use rather than a single occurrence of this feature. The reader used a classification scheme taken from Smitherman to identify the surface features characteristic of Black Vernacular English. The reader recorded the use of BVE if the features occurred throughout the paper. There was consistency in only a small percentage of Black student's papers (imaginative - 02%; informative - 04%; persuasive - 03%; narrative - 10%). More often, the writers used a BVE feature in one instance and standard English features in others. The inconsistency of the use of BVE shows that the writers are capable of using Standard English forms. While the use of some BVE characteristics may not have improved the students' essays, neither did they prevent the communication of ideas.

The most common occurrences of BVE features were in the incorrect use of subject-verb agreement and irregular verbs. These and other BVE features, however, were not unique to the Black students. Multiple negation and incorrect uses of the -ed and -s morphemes were apparent in the work of both Black and White students. A feature that seemed to be more unique to the Black students was the Main Verb-Perfect (Have/Had + MV + DO) Ex. It was the odd looking bird who had enter my front porch - Smitherman, 1985)

When Smitherman and Wright (1985) compared Black students' NAEP essays written in the 1979 and 1969 assessments, they found an overall decline in the use of BVE in 1979. They report, however, that there was an increase in the use of BVE in the descriptive essays (essays that are labeled informative in the present study). This report is corroborated in the present study because there was more BVE in the favorite music essay (informative mode) than in the other essays.

It may be true that while BVE continues to be widely used in oral language, it is on the wane in written language except in cases where the essay is written in response to a topic that is highly emotional. BVE may also be in the process of becoming more characteristic of socio-economic classifications than ethnic classifications. This is shown in the 01% of the White students' papers (imaginative mode) that contained BVE. (Underlining added by Principal Investigator)

Examples:

> If I can go back in time, I would like to be five year old, because that day I have fun and I use to be going to the store alot and I use to play video game and I use to ride bike alot and I meet alot of guy in the store and they was my friend the next day and then, I start it geting old I then I went school the name was Hatch Middle School and I made alot of friend then I went go Camden High and I made alot friend and I
>
> (student did not finish)
>
> Black Student - NJHSPT

> Once upon a time their was a old, old witch who lived in a haunted house.' One day it was three couples and it started thundering and lightning, so they went up to the house. It took a long time for someone to come to the door it was late, late night and a old man came to the door. They asked him do he have any room for them. They went in and get into their rooms and got ready for bed they got in and they saw a lot of spooky things happening the girls were in their where the men were they almost got killed until they got out of the house in the sleeping clothes and the car would start. The people was in the house came out and got them and killed them and they didn't bury them and they cooked them and ate them.
>
> Black Student - NAEP

> In the dark of night 3 adults walk to a town some two miles away but the know not what awaits them for in the mists lay danger "Something is out there" said one. "Naa Its just the wind, Suddley he heard something behind him he turned arround. a small light flashed in his eye then it was gone, so were the others, for it was a unidentified flying object or a ufo, He rushed to town as fast as he could but when he come he startled from what he seen because what he seen was nothing no people at all just buildings nothing else.
>
> White Student - NAEP

In the first essay above, the student used BVE consistently. There are several other problems in the essay as well. The data cannot prove that all of the student's problems were caused by the use of BVE, but it can be concluded that the student does not appear to have a grasp of standard English grammar. There are also problems in the second essay and there are BVE constructions. The BVE, however, is not consistent and it does not interfere with the students' attempt to tell a story. The third example is an essay written by a White student. The student used some of the features characteristic of BVE, but like the previous example, the most troubling problems in this essay probably do not stem from the BVE features.

Statistical Analysis

Correlation Study

The comparisons shown in Table 6 substantiate the generalization that both Black and White students used the features described above in each mode of dicourse. In order to determine the degree to which the features were related to each other, a correlation matrix was prepared. The matrix shows the correlations among features related at the .05 and .01 levels of significance.

Place Table 7 here.

There are high, low and moderate correlations among the features identified by the classification scheme. The high correlations indicate a high level of interdependency between the features while the low correlations indicate relative independence. These high and low correlations also document that there was some diversity in the students' writing.

The highest correlation is between unity and focus (.76) - the two features representing organization of ideas. Students whose writing was well organized wrote sentences that focused on their theme. The same students were also able to maintain a consistent unity throughout the essay. Not surprisingly, unity and focus are interdependent.

Task awareness and audience awareness also are highly correlated. There were a few instances, however, in which a student appeared to perceive the task in an acceptable way, but did not write appropriately for the audience. This occurred most often in the letter to the principal. Students may have explained the reasons for desiring one school shift over another, (task perception) but wrote the letter as if it were going to a peer rather than to the principal of the school (audience awareness).

As expected, a high correlation between focus and sentence sense is obtained. In this investigation, those students who wrote well-organized sentences usually focused them toward the main idea. Those who wrote illogical sentences showed a complete lack of control over the organization of their essay. On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between conversational tone and focus. When the students changed the tone of their essays, they often lost the focus of the main idea. Focus is moderately, but significantly correlated with most of the other strategies.

The low and/or negative correlations of cultural vocabulary and BVE with other features and the high correlations of these two features with each other are indications of the following factors:

1. The students who used BVE also used cultural vocabulary.

2. Students who used BVE and cultural vocabulary did not use the grammatical, organizational or task perception features as they were described in the classification scheme.

The matrix characterizes what is generally accepted as effective writing. There are high correlations between the features grouped as grammar and syntax, organization and task perception. All of these components contribute equally to the effectiveness of written language. No one of them is sufficient alone. The data show that the students in this investigation who can successfully manage the grammar of written language tend to be the same students who organize their ideas appropriately and can write to specific audiences.

Factor Analysis

To establish more firmly the value of the classification scheme in identifying students' use of the features, the features were factor analyzed. The varimax factor analysis is shown in Table 8.

Insert Table 8 Here

With the exception of conversational tone, the varimax factor analysis resulted in a five-factor solution which is identical to the classification scheme used to analyze the essays.

Conversational tone contributes to the factors representing the other grammatical and syntactical features. Yet, it differs in kind from them. Conversational tone is more a rhetorical matter than a grammatical skill. It is a vital feature in this investigation because it is highly related to the oral characteristic in Black culture. Therefore, while an identification of "tone" in any situation is a difficult task and certainly one that is far from objective, the importance of conversational tone to the instruction of Black students makes it valuable to this investigation. For this reason, it was retained as a grammatical and syntactical feature.

Conclusion

This investigation provides an analysis of the writing features exhibited in the essays written by a selected group of Black and White eighth grade and/or 13 year old students in the 1983-84 NAEP. The investigation also includes data taken from a random sample of the NJHSPT essays written by 9th grade students in a selected urban area. Data were analyzed across four modes of writing: imaginative, informative, persuasive and narrative. The analyses

show that there are differences between the essays written by Black and White students. The differences, however, are more quantitative than qualitative. Both groups used most of the same features but fewer Black students than White students used the features effectively.

The 375 essays in the study were analyzed by identifying 14 features observed in the students' papers and placed in four categories by the Principal Investigator and 2 additional readers. The categories are: Grammar and Syntax, Organization, Task Perception and Cultural Influence. The features were not arbitrarily imposed; they were taken directly from the students' writing during a preliminary reading of 111 essays. While Black and White students' essays were analyzed, the features as used by the Black Students were the primary focus of the analysis.

Therefore, the conclusions that follow pertain to Black students specifically, though some may be characteristic of White students as well.

. The imaginative and narrative essays drew more enthusiastic responses and were written in a more engaging manner than were the informative and persuasive essays. This is shown in the data by the length of the imaginative and narrative essays, the creative thought displayed, and the use of discriptive words and phrases. The amount of dialogue the students used in their imaginative and narrative essays is an indication of their personal involvement in the the writing. Moreover, the students were able to complete these tasks.

. There is a direct correlation between length of the essays and the quality of writing. The more students wrote, the less able they seemed to be able to hold to the conventions of writing or to organize their ideas appropriately.

. Therefore, while the imaginative and narrative essays show a positive attitude toward writing and a healthy enthusiasm for writing, they also unveil more consistently than in the other modes, the students' deficiencies in writing skills.

. The most difficult mode for Black and White students was the informative. Several students did not attempt to write the assigned essay in this mode. Of those who wrote, the essays are extremely short. Students seemed unable to distance themselves from the subject and to tell why they liked a particular kind of music.

. There is a marked similarity between the way features were used by the NAEP students and the NJHSPT students even though the tasks, the testing situations and even the motivation for writing were different. This similarity is more obvious in the NAEP imaginative mode than in the informative and persuasive. Both the NAEP imaginative and the NJHSPT narrative writing tasks had a personal focus, but there were differences in the nature and administration of the instruments. The NJHSPT narrative called for a retelling of a real situation in the lives of the students while the NAEP task called for an imaginary story. NJHSPT allowed more time for writing and provided time for pre-planning and rereading. Students taking the NJHSPT were aware that the test was of extreme importance to their futures. Even though they would have three additional chances to pass the test (grades 10,11 and 12), an unacceptable score could eventually prevent them from receiving a high school diploma. The NAEP students, on the other hand, were told prior to testing that the test would have no effect on their grades. Despite these differences, the students' writing in the NAEP national sample and the NJHSPT local sample contain most of the same strengths and weaknesses.

. The nature of the tasks in the imaginative and narrative modes affected the use of some features more than others. More NJHSPT students employed effective organization in their narrative essays than did the NAEP students in their imaginative essays. It seemed to be easier for the students to organize a personal narrative than an imaginary story in a first draft. This may be due to the fact that a narrative occurs in a particular time frame. Thus, the retelling is naturally linear. In an imaginary piece, the sequence must be imposed by the writer. Thus, on an average, the narratives written by Black NJHSPT students are better organized than the imaginative essays written by Black NAEP students.

. Grammatical skills were poorly used by students even though it is highly likely that they had received more instruction in grammar than in writing generally. This lends support to the claim of many writing researchers that grammar instruction has little effect on writing ability. (Applebee, 1981; Farr and Daniels, 1986)

. Black Vernacular English was not consistently used by the students. There are many occurrances of features that can be identified as BVE, but in only a few papers can it be concluded that students were unaware of the corresponding standard forms or unable to use them. The BVE features were used more often in the longer pieces of writing. This may indicate that the students were more comfortable with these modes and tended to use more informal language. The purpose of the present study was to identify those features of writing that did or did not impede the linguistic ability of students to produce effective written language. In this study, a consistent use of BVE features was found to be an indication of the students' inabilities to use standard forms, which would appear to influence perceptions of effective writing. However, since fewer than 5% of the students used BVE consistently in each mode, it can be concluded that BVE is not the source of the Black students' writing problems. The reasons for their difficulties may more likely stem from a lack of writing practice and effective instruction.

. The oral tradition characteristic of Black people is evident in the students' writing. Many students used a conversational tone in their essays. The more personal the essay, the more a conversational tone was used. The oral tradition could also be seen in the use of cultural vocabulary. Cultural expressions are often used by Black speakers. The students transferred this oral characteristic to their writing. In the examples presented in this analysis, the cultural expressions were often used in dialogue. This was called conversational tone, which may also be culturally oriented. The use of culturally oriented expressions might be referred to as a kind of "cultural egocentricity" or more correctly an example of the social foundations of language.

. The reading of the essays suggested that the students may not have had experience with a wide range of reading materials. This conclusion can easily be drawn from the ghost stories. In many instances, the students began their stories with "once upon a time" - an indication that they were adopting a story style appropriate for much younger children. The influence of television was evident in a number of the ghost stories because of the similarity in the plots used by the students and those in popular television shows. It was not obvious in the essays, however, that the students had been exposed to adolescent literature.

Implications for Instruction

This investigation describes the features of writing used by a selected sample of Black and White students in writing essays for assessment purposes. The investigation shows that there are more similarities than differences between Black and White student writers. Given a topic of interest and a task which is understood, Black students like White students are willing to express themselves. However, the data in this study indicates that fewer Black than White students are able to write effectively. Many of the Black students' essays showed complexity in thought and detail, but those ideas were often shrouded in inappropriate conventions and faulty organization. Therefore, this investigation confirms the hypothesis stated in the introduction to this study that in order to raise their test scores and to attain the standards the school and society has set for them, Black students need instruction and development. The instruction offered to Black students need not be different from instruction for White students, but it must be conceived within the context of an understanding and appreciation for the Black experience. Instruction for Black students must also place as much emphasis on the students' potential possibilities for becoming effective writers as it does on their deficiencies which are apparent.

The task of teaching writing to early adolescents is rarely simple. It requires dedication, knowledge and the ability to plan learning experiences which can capture the imagination and energy that is inherent in this age group. By the time students get to the eighth grade, most of them have already developed a desire to write. This is evidenced by the fact that

many students write on the walls of school buildings and other conspicuous places and pass notes to each other at inappropriate times. The responsibility of middle and junior high school teachers is to channel this natural enthusiasm for written communication into more rewarding and acceptable channels. Yet, in an attempt to broaden students' horizons, teachers must not lose sight of the students themselves. Students, and all that they represent, must be the central focus in writing instruction. Instruction should reflect the view that students are not specimen to be manipulated; they are monuments to human experiences. Writing is a way of helping students to develop, understand and share those experiences. Teachers can be catalysts in this venture, but they should not impose or interfere with the process.

Students should be encouraged to share their experiences. Whether these experiences are shared through first draft writing efforts or through oral language, the community of listeners or readers in the classroom must be accepting. The listeners or readers may pose questions to the speaker or writer for clarification, but the student who has had the experience must remain in control of it. The development of a sense of control over one's own language is a vital component in learning to write because control leads to self discipline. The exercise of control, however, is an illusive experience for many Black students. Social, economic, political and educational experiences have taught them to believe that they must always be subjected to the demands of others. Many Black students are hesitant to take risks in writing for fear that they will not conform to external demands. It is easy to identify such students in the classroom. They are the students who share experiences hesitantly and with a questioning stance - eagerly waiting to see if they have won the approval of their audiences. Teaching these students to take risks as they manipulate language in writing may be the most difficult, but the most rewarding lesson of all. Writing instruction should begin with the establishment of an accepting and non threatening classroom atmosphere.

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Acceptance leads to motivation and motivation is the first step toward success. Students who feel that their ideas are valued will continue to write. As the volume of writing increases, students will find that they are discovering new ideas and more novel ways of presenting these ideas. It is at this point that the teacher can intervene and teach the intricate skills that are necessary for academic writing. The skills should not be isolated and taught prescriptively. They should be presented as alternatives that can be adjusted according to the mode and purpose for writing. Students should be helped to understand that writing skills are not intended to constrain writers. Skills serve to free writers to move into different directions and to take their readers with them. Teaching writing as a self-engineered process places the responsibility for development in the hands of the students. When this process takes place under the guiding eye of a teacher who provides continuous feedback, progress is inevitable. Some students will make more progress than others, but each student will move along the developmental continuum.

Writing instruction should include a variety of modes and tasks. It can begin with personal writing, but it must move beyond the self and enter the wider world of discourse. Students should write for real audiences and for important purposes. They should transmit their ideas to school principals and other administrators and to mayors, newspaper editors and parents. Students should also write for younger audiences in attempts to become role models for them. Young adolescents are an enthusiastic group for these activities because adolescence is a time of personal idealism. Writing can be an important element in this phase of development.

The use of conversational tone and colloquial expressions referred to as cultural vocabulary in this investigation shows that oral language strongly influenced the Black students' written language. Teachers should use this oral language facility as a way of developing writing ability. There is no prescribed process. Oral language should not necessarily precede or follow written language in the classroom. All forms of language march together in tune to tt is at this point that the teacher can intervene and teach the intricate skills that are necessary for academic writing. The skills should not be isolated and taught prescriptively. They should be presented as

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Although conformity is a necessity in the education of large groups of students and in some instances, students must adhere to specific guidelines as to what to write and how to write it, these instances should be minimal. On all other occasions, teachers must help students to use writing as a window through which they can peer in at their own thoughts, a means of organizing those thoughts and a medium for sharing thoughts with others. A large part of writing instruction should include spontaneity - passing on to the students both the right to write according to their own belief systems and the responsibility for incorporating acceptable forms into the writing.

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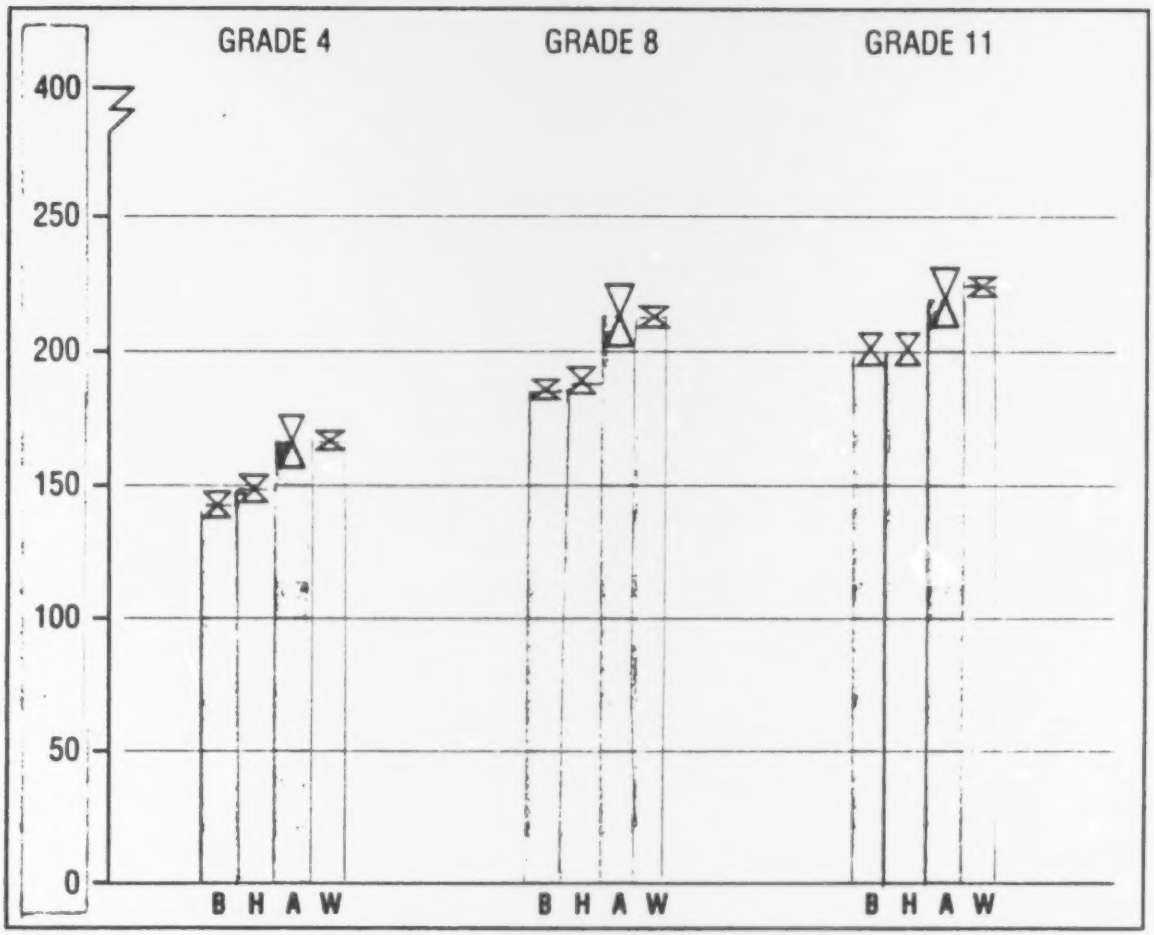
Figures and Tables

Figure 1

Average Writing Achievement (ARM) for Black, Hispanic, Asian-American, and White Students



⧖ = estimated average writing achievement and 95 percent confidence interval. It can be said with 95 percent certainty that the average writing achievement of the population of interest is in this interval.

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Figure 2

Classification Scheme

I. Grammar and Syntax

The writer's ability to communicate ideas clearly. Shows control of the writing.

A. I/C Inter/Intra Sentence Connectives

The writer uses a variety of semantic and syntactic structures to tie thoughts together.

B. DL Descriptive Language

The writer uses modifying words and phrases to elaborate ideas.

C. E Ellipses

The writer does not omit words that are central to the idea.

D. R Repetition

The writer does not repeat words and phrases unnecessarily.

E. SS Sentence sense

The writer uses clear and concise sentences that contain a central idea.

F. TM Tense Markers

The writer uses correct verb forms to maintain tense consistency.

G. CT Conversational Tone

The writer uses a conversational tone similar to oral language.

II. Organization

The writer's ability to order ideas logically.

A. U/T Unity of Thought

The writer presents ideas in a unified context with a clear sense of progression from beginning to end.

B. F Focus

The writer uses sentences that are logically related to the topic and to each other.

III. Task Perception

The writer's understanding of the task requirements.

A. TA Task Awareness

The writer analyzes each part of the task and writes specifically to them.

B. AA Audience Awareness

The writer is aware of the audience and uses appropriate style and tone.

C. TC Task Completion

The writer completed the task as it was assigned.

IV. Cultural Influence

The writer's ability to use culturally oriented words and phrases.

A. CV Cultural Vocabulary

The writer uses words and/or phrases that are unique to his/her cultural experience.

B. BVE Black Vernacular English

The writer consistently uses structural forms characteristic of Black Vernacular English.

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Table 1

Readers' Classification of Essays

Reader	Blacks Correctly Identified	Whites Identified as Blacks	Blacks Identified as Whites	Minorities Identified as Blacks
Reader 1	17	4	6	5
Reader 2	13	4	10	2
Reader 3	17	6	6	3
Reader 4	14	5	9	4

PERCENTAGES OF READERS' IDENTIFICATIONS OF FEATURES-PART I

Table 2

Mode	N	Inter-Intra Sentence Connectives	Descriptive Language	Ellipses	Repetition	Sentence Sense	Tense Markers	Conversational Tone	Unity of Thought	Focus	Task Awareness	Audience Awareness	Task Completion	Cultural Vocabulary	Black Vernacular English
							NAEP	- WHITE							
Reader 1	50	52	92	78	94	72	78	04	70	78	86	98	96	02	0
Reader 2	50	50	96	80	90	76	78	03	70	84	88	98	96	02	0
Reader 3	50	54	96	78	94	78	76	04	72	80	92	98	98	0	0
							NAEP	- BLACK							
Reader 1	23	18	35	43	70	22	35	43	26	30	61	61	70	43	04
Reader 2	23	30	43	43	65	22	35	52	26	26	52	70	73	39	09
Reader 3	23	26	30	35	61	17	26	35	13	13	61	52	61	39	09
75							NJHSPT	- BLACK							75
Reader 1	50	26	58	56	64	36	44	24	52	42	74	96	94	08	20
Reader 2	50	28	58	58	70	44	42	26	54	48	68	90	96	04	24
Reader 3	50	26	62	58	66	36	52	26	52	46	74	96	96	08	22

Table 3

CORRELATIONS AMONG FEATURES IDENTIFIED BY READERS IN PART I

(N = 122)

	S.C.	D.L.	E	R	S S	T M	C T	U	F	T A	A A	T C	C V	BVE
Inter-Intra Sen. Conn														
Descriptive Lang.	.38**													
Ellipses	.31**	.49**												
Repetition	.11	.19*	.09											
Sentence Sense	.43**	.41**	.41**	.40**										
Tense Markers	.35**	.40**	.40**	.13	.33**									
Conversational Tone	-.31**	-.17	-.17	-.06	-.23*	-.25**								
Unity	.20*	.54**	.38**	.22*	.40**	.31**	-.26**							
Focus	.27**	.54**	.27**	.35**	.47**	.31**	-.31**	.71**						
Task Awareness	.03	.24**	.29**	.17	.21*	.20*	.01	.32**	.32**					
Audience Awareness	.10	.34**	.25**	.08	.37**	.28**	-.08	.28**	.29**	.45**				
Task Completion	.08	.07	.07	-.06	.12	.13	-.17	.16	.13	.05	.23*			
Cultural Vocab.	-.13	-.32**	-.21*	-.10	-.42**	-.17	.34**	-.26**	-.29**	-.12	-.35**	-.19*		
Black V. English	-.23*	-.22*	-.09	-.20*	-.24**	-.36**	.20*	-.15	-.15	.10	.08	.06	.20*	

Levels of significance indicated by asterisk.

* = .05

** = .01

Figure 3

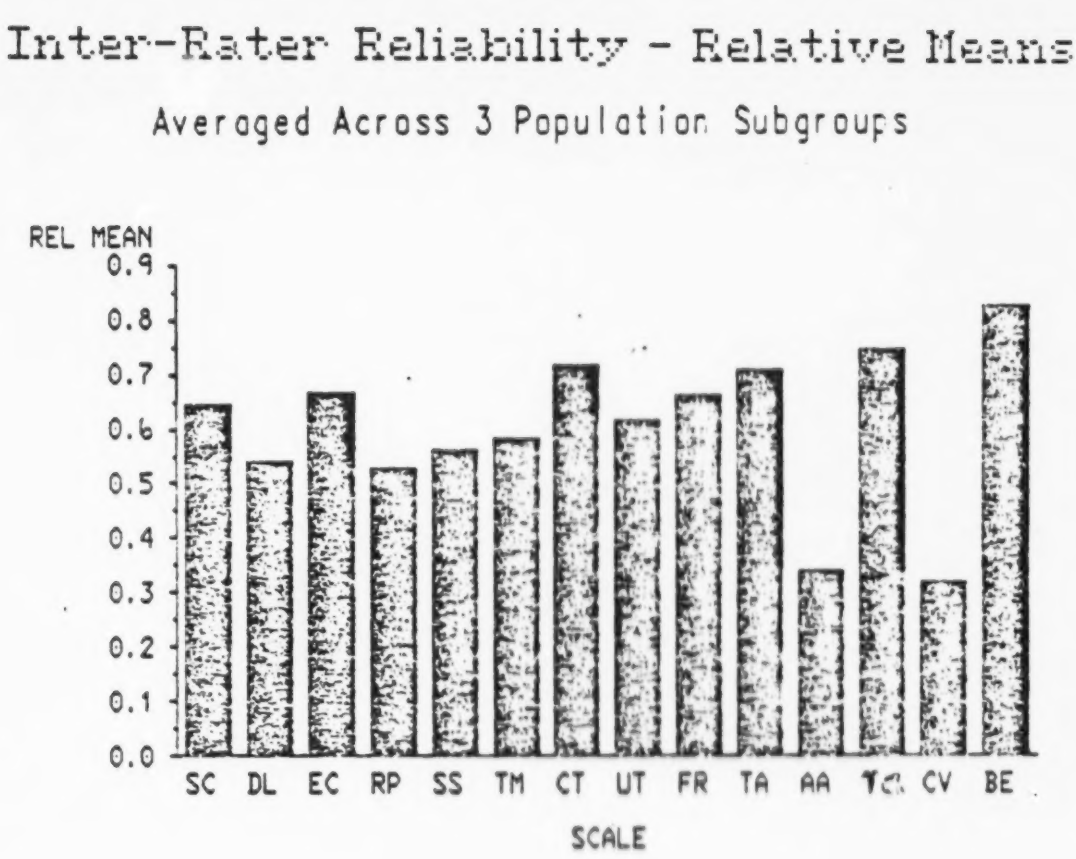
Inter-Rater Reliability - Relative Means
Averaged Across 3 Population Subgroups
REL MEAN
0.9
0.8
0.7
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0.0
SC DL EC RP SS TM CT UT FR TA AA TC CV BE
SCALE

Table 4

READER'S CLASSIFICATION OF ESSAYS BY RACE-PART II

Imaginative

N	Race	Correctly Identified	No Response	Identified as Black	Identified as White
95	Black	56	9		30
106	White	70	2	34	

Informational

N	Race	Correctly Identified	No Response	Identified as Black	Identified as White
95	Black	62	23		10
106	White	69	23	14	

Persuasive

N	Race	Correctly Identified	No Response	Identified as Black	Identified as White
95	Black	53	24		18
106	White	67	5	30	

Table 5

READER'S ANALYSES OF ESSAYS ACCORDING TO DESCRIPTIONS IN CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

	N	% Low	% Average	% High
Imaginative				
Whites Ident. as Black	34	38	44	18
Blacks Ident. as White	30	53	33	13
Informational				
Whites Ident. as Black	14	28	35	35
Blacks Ident. as White	10	20	40	40
Persuasive				
Whites Ident. as Black	30	40	30	30
Blacks Ident. as White	18	27	50	22

Table 6 PERCENTAGES OF READER'S IDENTIFICATION OF FEATURES-PART II

Mode	N	No Resp	Inter/Intra Sent Connectives	Descriptive Language	Ellipses	Repetition	Sentence Sense	Tense Markers	Conversational Tone	Unity of Thought	Focus	Task Awareness	Audience Awareness	Task Completion	Cultural Vocabulary	Black Vernacular English
							NAEP	- BLACK								
Imaginative	95	9	17	67	49	86	42	48	22	37	45	90	93	81	07	02
Informative	95	23	31	56	65	60	46	77	01	46	46	63	79	71	07	04
Persuasive	95	24	32	87	83	90	55	77	15	53	58	44	70	85	03	03
							NAEP	- WHITE								
Imaginative	106	2	27	73	78	93	61	76	06	58	63	90	99	93	01	01
Informative	106	23	43	77	82	81	67	94	01	69	66	67	91	84	03	0
Persuasive	106	9	54	93	84	90	64	91	08	65	70	66	78	87	01	0
							NJHSPT	-BLACK								
Narrative	172	-	16	65	60	47	47	41	25	52	55	91	92	95	10	02

Table 7 CORRELATIONS AMONG FEATURES IDENTIFIED BY READERS IN PART II

(N = 375)

	S.C.	D.L.	E	R	S S	T M	C T	U	F	T A	A A	T C	C V	BVE
Inter-Intra Sen. Conn														
Descriptive Lang.	.32**													
Ellipses	.32**	.35**												
Repetition	.21**	.29**	.17**											
Sentence Sense	.32**	.37**	.32**	.23**										
Tense Markers	.37**	.33**	.40**	.28**	.31**									
Conversational Tone	-.11	.04	-.15**	.02	-.16**	-.06								
Unity	.37**	.36**	.32**	.20**	.36**	.36**	-.05							
Focus	.35**	.32**	.28**	.17**	.41**	.35**	-.09	.76**						
Task Awareness	.12*	.19**	.14**	.06	.15**	.16**	.01	.20**	.22**					
Audience Awareness	.15**	.17**	.22**	.14**	.13*	.11	-.06	.18**	.15**	.52**				
Task Completion	.05	.16**	.18**	.13*	.07	.15**	.03	.17**	.17**	.25**	.25**			
Cultural Vocab.	-.09	-.06	.04	.02	.03	-.04	.18**	-.04	-.04	.07	-.00	.04		
Black V. English	-.09	-.11	.00	.05	.00	-.08	-.03	-.01	-.01	.02	-.00	-.06	.15**	

Levels of significance indicated by asterisk.

* = .05

** = .01

Table 8

VARIMAX FACTOR ANALYSIS OF FEATURES IDENTIFIED IN NAEP AND NJHSPT-PART II

	1	2	3	4	5
Sentence Connectives	0.5023	0.3550	0.0256	-0.1740	-0.1840
Descriptive Language	0.6203	0.2462	0.1462	0.1372	-0.1799
Elipses	0.6101	0.1587	0.1868	-0.1932	0.0831
Repetition	0.6920	-0.0912	0.0429	0.1320	0.1139
Sentence Sense	0.5137	0.3957	0.0335	-0.1834	0.1246
Tense Markers	0.6465	0.2500	0.0723	-0.0275	-0.1051
Conversational Tone	-0.0680	-0.0230	0.0005	0.8759	-0.0274
Unity	0.2478	0.8621	0.1215	0.0254	-0.0127
Focus	0.2014	0.8895	0.1175	-0.0214	0.0011
Task Awareness	0.0203	0.1727	0.8072	-0.0102	0.0712
Audience Awareness	0.1172	0.0250	0.8192	-0.1549	0.0197
Complete Approach	0.1665	0.0359	0.5636	0.1903	-0.0988
Cultural Vocabulary	0.0415	-0.0354	0.0626	0.4515	0.6258
Vernacular Black English	-0.0528	0.0166	-0.0415	-0.1734	0.8205
	2.3229	2.0075	1.7398	1.2008	1.1937

Appendix A

FEATURES OF BLACK VERNACULAR ENGLISH

LINGUISTIC VARIABLE	EXAMPLE FROM NAEP ESSAY
ED MORPHEME :	
Main Verb-Past(MV + Ø)	Last night a odd-looking bird appeared in the neighborhood. It came to my backyard. It turn over trash can.
Main Verb-Perfect(Have/Had + MV + Ø)	It was the odd-looking bird who had enter my front porch.
Verbal Adjective(V + Ø)	Mother, also startle by the creature called police.
Passive(Be + MV + Ø)	It has two wires run from the side which is call a positive and negative wire.
S MORPHEME:	
Noun-Plural(N + Ø pl)	He laid there for a few minute.
Noun-Possessive(N + Ø poss)	The bird kept on walking until he got to the Professor laboratory.
Third Person-Singular(V + Ø)	The bird have long leg and long mouth. He stay by water.
COPULA:	
Be + Main Verb (Ø + MV)	Lawrence,....if you don't get rid of that bird, it going to eat all of the hens on the farm.
Be + Noun (Ø + N)	That the end of my store.
Be + Adjective (Ø + Adj)	It very loud.
Be + Preposition (Ø + Prep)	Now we at the Chevy.
Be + Adverb (Ø + Adv)	The bird there.
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT-PRESENT (Subj pl + is)	A bird and egg is in that car.
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT-PAST (Subj pl + was)	The legs was those of a stork.
IRREGULAR VERBS	Last night I was walking down the street. I seen a odd-looking bird.
	I took him to the museum...Then the men from the museum came out to the house and give me a check for 2 million dollars plus a free trip to Mexico.

Appendix B

CORRELATIONS AMONG FEATURES USED BY WHITE STUDENTS

	S.C.	D.L.	E	R	S S	T M	C T	U	F	T A	A A	TC	C V	BVE
Inter-Intra Sen. Conn														
Descriptive Lang.	.36**													
Ellipses	.25*	.59**												
Repetition	.19	.52**	.27**											
Sentence Sense	.38**	.44**	.39**	.28**										
Tense Markers	.27**	.55**	.81**	.34**	.40**									
Conversational Tone	.11	-.01	-.03	.05	-.23*	-.07								
Unity	.41**	.31**	.47**	.14	.52**	.47**	.00							
Focus	.38**	.35**	.49**	.11	.71**	.40**	-.23*	.72**						
Task Awareness	.24*	.18	.20*	.19	.25**	.28**	.03	.23*	.25**					
Audience Awareness	.23*	.41**	.21**	.39**	.34**	.27**	-.10	.25**	.34**	.53**				
Task Completion	.11	.41**	.45**	.39	.20*	.56**	-.10	.25**	.20*	.34**	.31**			
Cultural Vocab.	.14	.05	.05	.03	.09	.04	.07	.08	.09	.06	.03	.03		
Black V. English	-.13	.02	.02	.01	.05	.02	-.04	.04	.04	.03	.02	.02	-.02	

Levels of significance indicated by asterisk.

* = .05

** = .01

CORRELATIONS AMONG FEATURES USED BY BLACK STUDENTS

	S.C.	D.L.	E	R	S S	T M	C T	U	F	T A	A A	TC	C V	BVE
Inter-Intra Sen. Conn														
Descriptive Lang.	.26*													
Ellipses	.27**	.52**												
Repetition	.24	.62**	.56**											
Sentence Sense	.32**	.49**	.54**	.38**										
Tense Markers	.33**	.59**	.55**	.63**	.37**									
Conversational Tone	-.15	.13	.02	.05	-.14	.04								
Unity	.39**	.48**	.34**	.37**	.33**	.35**	-.01							
Focus	.37**	.42**	.30**	.38**	.40**	.30**	-.08	.70**						
Task Awareness	.11	.46**	.31**	.53	.23*	.36**	.04	.22*	.23*					
Audience Awareness	.11	.45**	.32**	.64	.25*	.37**	.16	.32**	.33**	.84**				
Task Completion	.03	.49**	.34**	.47	.25*	.39**	.14	.37**	.32**	.53**	.54**			
Cultural Vocab.	-.16	.13	.09	.10	.13	.06	.15	-.06	.05	.13	.11	.14		
Black V. English	-.11	.00	.15	.09	.10	-.06	-.07	.10	.10	.11	.09	.01	.27**	

Levels of significance indicated by asterisk.

* = .05

** = .01